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LANGTON RECORDS

JOURNALS AND  
LETTERS FROM  
CANADA 1837-1846

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LANGTON RECORDS





ANNE LANGTON.

*From a miniature painted by herself, 1810.*

Arthur Earle January 1905

# LANGTON RECORDS

JOURNALS AND LETTERS  
FROM CANADA

1837-1846

WITH PORTRAIT AND SKETCHES

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## PREFACE

THOSE who have read *The Story of Our Family*, written by my Aunt Anne Langton, will remember that in 1833 my Uncle John went out to Canada, and settled himself as a farmer on Sturgeon Lake, one of the chain of lakes situated north of Lake Ontario, where, in 1836, 1837 he was joined by his father, mother, sister, and aunt (Miss Alice Curren).

These journals, written by Aunt Anne at different times during the first ten years of her life in Canada, came into my possession, with other Canadian letters and papers, as a gift from my father.

They seemed to me to be well worth preserving, as a vivid picture of the domestic life of an early settlement in that district of Canada.

For members and connections of the Langton family they will, I feel sure, possess a special interest for the sake of the persons, each in his or her way remarkable, who formed the family party at Blythe. All must recognise the courage and patience with which, having once decided to emigrate, they faced the long sea and land journey, and encountered the difficulties and troubles which awaited them on reaching their new home. Readily accepting the conditions of life in a

new country, they entered with interest upon their novel experiences, and made the best of the situation.

I need not dwell further on this. What I have said expresses my own feeling, and my wish to give my family and friends the opportunity of reading these journals, which may now be left to speak for themselves.

ELLEN JOSEPHINE PHILIPS.

1904.



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## INTRODUCTION

AS an introduction to the journals describing the settlement of the Langtons at Blythe on Sturgeon Lake, and the incidents of daily life in the backwoods, it seems necessary to refer to a long letter written by my uncle John to his father on his return to Canada, after his short visit to England in 1836, in which he discusses the project of their joining him there. The idea had already been thrown out and talked over before my uncle left England, but no actual decision had been reached. Under the circumstances of the family, economical living was a necessity, and the choice lay between a retired spot in England, some town on the Continent where simplicity of life prevailed, or Sturgeon Lake, where he could offer them a site for a dwelling, and his own service and protection. My uncle was strongly of opinion that no place open to them promised them so much of substantial comfort and happiness as they would find with him in Canada. At that time he took a very hopeful view of the prospects of the country. There seemed to be a probability of Government grants being made for public works, roads, canals, and other means of transport, so necessary for the success of agriculture in the back country. Settlers, encouraged by this hope, appeared to be freely taking up concessions of land.

My grandfather had taken a keen interest in his son's Canadian adventure. His own love of travel,

which had induced him to undertake the tour & broad with his family in 1815-1820, was but little diminished by the approach of old age, and he now felt a strong desire to see something of Colonial life. He was quite eager to go out, and his wife and daughter felt that the simpler life which they could lead in Canada was a great inducement to make the venture. With all this encouragement my uncle proceeded in his letter to discuss details. He was convinced that he could build them a house on some higher part of his land, which he could make comfortable for them. In the end it did prove a very comfortable house; but it was not ready when they arrived, and the difficulties experienced in the early days of their life there are related in the journals. The first sketch shows the appearance of the house as it was originally put up, the second after the addition of a room. The walls were of hewn logs, bedded in mortar, a foundation of three feet being of masonry.

## LANGTON RECORDS

1837

LETTER from THOMAS LANGTON to his son WILLIAM,  
May 25, 1837. Received July 15, 1837.

MY DEAR WILLIAM—I will not venture to say anything on the subject of our yesterday's parting. I could only speak of my own feelings, and pass over silently those of the females of my party, who perhaps feel more acutely, though not more strongly than man, but who suffer more from the effort to suppress the natural expression of their feelings. In our vessel we however, I believe, were the only ones who seemed to have anybody to feel for them, or for them to feel about, one lady excepted, who was leaving her own friends and relatives, but was going to rejoin her husband and children at Toronto.

The weather continued favourable, though the wind was not propitious, we got on, however. Starting at two o'clock we had at seven the Menai Straits open, and at nine, when I turned in, we were running parallel to the coast of Anglesea. The ladies took to their beds much earlier, though not driven there by sickness, which did not manifest itself with your mother till about the time of my going to bed, and with Anne and Miss Curren not till the next morning. When I waked about four o'clock I concluded, from the absence

of all swell, that we were taking the passage to the north of Ireland, and so it proved. The south wind holding on, this place was resorted to in the night; and we still continue with the green island on our left, though the wind has since played us a trick, and has turned to the west or thereabouts. Yesterday it was very cool, this morning early fine and warm, now again (eleven o'clock) cold and drizzly.

The ladies keep to their beds—the elderly ones from the unsettled state of their stomachs; Anne by orders, having got a little cold. "Fury" I took into our room last night, where she behaved beautifully, and this morning she runs about, nobody objecting. She is now in the cabin beside me, and has just now barked angrily at the Captain, who had walked in in his oilskin coat, and a sou'-wester on his head, to the amusement of the whole party. I find, however, that my jacket, which the cold and drizzle had compelled me to put on, is by no means so *comme-il-faut* as a real P jacket, and several of our fellow-travellers looked very hard at me this morning when I put it on, and if they had been of the canine race I fear they would have barked. The second mate, with a sly wink, tapped me on the shoulder, and bid me "go up fasten that there line," but I told him I was only engaged to work on deck. As for my trousers, I shall hardly venture to put them on, unless driven to it by stress of weather, but reserve them for Sturgeon Lake. As yet there is little sickness. Your mother leads off, but there are many pale faces, which indicate that others will soon join in the dance.

*June 4.*—A long interruption to my journal. In fact before the night closed in the prediction, with which I concluded, was fully verified. The oldest sailor on board (myself) was as sick as any one, and I



have never till to-day had the courage to take pen in hand. The wind has been occasionally moderate, we have had one day nearly calm, and sometimes had to reef topsails; but the wind has almost always been in our teeth. We have, from the losing sight of land to this hour, always had the ship's head as near the wind as it would lie. The motion in consequence has been very uneasy, and we have made comparatively little way, and are at this moment nearer Greenland than any other land.

During these ten days the ladies have been very ill. I hope, however, that the sickness is abating, though it has by no means left them; even Anne is not quite seasoned yet. If, however, we could but have moderate weather, with a less unfavourable wind, I flatter myself they would be able, if not to be amused with the rough, boisterous mirth of the young men, to take an interest in the conversations that are frequently going on among the more serious of the party, and so to pass the time of, I fear, a not very short passage, with some comfort to themselves.

*June 7.*—A couple of rough days have again interrupted my writing, but they have been days of good progress, and indeed I was hardly just to the sailing of the *Independence* when I said that we had made comparatively little way. We were then within about four hundred miles of the south point of Greenland, which, you will see by the map, was doing well in eleven days of contrary wind. I must now tell you something of our fellow-passengers, all British or American, with the exception of one German—my neighbour at dinner—a Frankfurter, so that I am well placed for a little talk of old times and old places. The British are mostly mercantile. We have an Oldham spinner, rather vulgar but modest; a

Wakefield manufacturer, very vulgar and very forward ; a Warrington pinmaker, 50 per cent in advance of the other two ; and a Leicester manufacturer—stockings, I suppose—very much of a gentleman. His companion, a young man of about eighteen, also gentlemanlike and sensible—a student of the law ; and another Englishman, travelling apparently for amusement, whose name I have not yet found out. Of Scotchmen—Mr. Gibson of Glasgow—sensible, steady, and serious ; Mr. Pattison, of the same place, I believe—Scotch to the backbone, humourous, caustic, and sparing nobody if he has an opportunity of saying a cutting thing, or raising a laugh at any one's expense ; and Mr. Fleming, who has been long settled at New York, but is either re-settled in N. Britain, or desirous of being so. This latter is a very cheerful and agreeable companion, very friendly, and offers his assistance to us if we should want it in New York. Of Irish we have, I think, only two—one from Belfast, apparently settled in America, with an American wife and children. But I have forgot Mr. Phillips—a Jew—whose brothers I understand are Rothschilds' agents in New York, and who is supposed by my American informant to be going over to look into their transactions, for the Rothschilds, of whom he is a friend ; Mr. Phillips is a pleasant, well-informed man. Of the Americans I must name first Mr. Ormstead, who with an only child, a girl of about eighteen, and her "future," a Mr. Schermerhorn, the only son of a rich New York merchant, are decidedly the most aristocratic of this part of our fellow-travellers. Mr. Ormstead is clever, very well-informed, cheerful, very willing to talk, rather than talkative, and the one of the party with whom I have the most converse. He chats also a good deal with Anne. His future son-in-law is very

reserved, and mixes little with his countrymen, who, as Mr. Ormstead informs me, are nearly all of a second-rate class, and whose acquaintance it would not be easy to decline on land if he had allowed himself to be familiar with them on board. They are indeed a noisy, boisterous, rough set. Your acquaintance, Roberts, is decidedly one of the best behaved of those who join in the general amusements going on from morning till midnight. There are, however, two or three other Americans, who, without ranking for wealth, etc., along with Ormstead and Schermerhorn, keep likewise very much aloof from the wild set. Of these Mr. Ormstead believes most, if not all, to be driven home by the difficulties of the times—all more or less damaged, and some of them seriously. Indeed one, the wildest of the set, said in my hearing he did not care if he did not lose more than he had—he should but have to begin again as he had at first. From the conversation and stories I occasionally hear I should tremble for the eventual solvency of those great American houses in England, which have been the medium for lending British capital to American speculators—principally land speculators. Farms worth dollars 10/m sold, from some supposed capabilities, for 100/m, and in a month or two, the futility of the expectations becoming apparent, would be sold again, could a buyer be found, for less than the real value. These stories vary in the details, but the same features run through them all. Every one has his story to tell, and though some of them may be exaggerated, and some invented, it is evident that much money must have been borrowed which can never be repaid. Mr. Ormstead is not in business; he tells me he had the resolution to give it up when wealth was pouring in upon him, and he has never repented, nor would he, for twice what he has,

encounter the anxieties which all men in business in the States must be now experiencing. We have another American, a Mr. Height of New York, who deserves to be mentioned separately. He is clever, well-informed, talks well, and a great deal; but one cannot be ten minutes with him without seeing through his character as well nearly as if you had known him for ten years. No one ever had an adventure that he had not one of the same kind, much more extraordinary; no one has had such luck in making purchases of curious things, from superb lace that had been the Empress Catharine's, to a Leghorn hat made for the Queen of Naples, who seems to have died just in the nick of time to let him get hold of it at half price. He only gave a hundred pounds for it. Cameos, Intaglios, paintings, of the first excellence, have also fallen into his hands. My friend says that if he wanted information on any subject whatever he does not know the man so able to give it as Mr. Height, but unfortunately, if he had an hour's conversation with him on the subject he should doubt whether he could rely on one-fourth of what he had heard. Mr. Height, however, is rich, and has all the talent for becoming so. I have overlooked two of our countrymen—Mr. Moore and Mr. Cuthbertson, but Montreal merchants, the former Joe Langton's acquaintance, a very friendly, good-natured man, whom I like much. The other—my left-hand dinner neighbour—seldom speaks, except when spoken to, but he is civil enough, and I, of course, try to pick as much information from him as I can. Of the Americans there are three who come last from Manchester—one a Mr. Lathrop, a very nice young man, who joins the other young Americans in their mirth without letting himself down too much. He has a nice little wife, whom Anne seems to like, and

three little children, who recall every moment the three little grandchildren whom we have left behind. Not that there is any likeness, except that they are nice, lively little things. The other two Manchester Americans are a Mr. Richards, and a lad in his office named Blakemore, who seeing "Seedley Terrace" on Fury's collar, made acquaintance by talking to me about Mr. Stell, whom he knows. The Toronto lady seems to be about forty or fifty, and, I should think, to use Mr. Ormstead's phrase, not of the first class; but she is quiet, modest, and gives occasionally a little information about Canadian matters. I think I have nearly told you all that could interest you about our companions, the names of several of whom I have not heard, nor shall inquire about. By the bye, I recollect Miss Ledger, who ought to have been named. She is from Wakefield, has nobody with her, but is specially recommended to the Captain, who takes great care of her. Her health has been delicate, and she is still very invalidish, independently of the sea-sickness, but is going, as she told Anne in confidence, to be married to a gentleman in the States, who I think might have come to fetch her. She is decidedly the most companionable female in the ship—ourselves excepted, of course. She is sensible, well-informed, very religious, talks well, when she is well, and willingly.

*June 8.*—Yesterday and to-day have been days of good progress, though, being foggy and wet, unfavourable for exercise on deck, especially for the ladies. The wind has just failed us, and to put on the time the passengers are putting up to auction the tickets in a lottery, which they got up the day before yesterday. The plan of it is this—eight or ten days are selected during which it is probable we shall arrive at New York. These days are divided into portions of six

hours, and each ticket represents one of these portions. In whichever of these the pilot comes on board, the holder of the corresponding ticket pockets the stakes. These tickets fluctuate in value with the state of the wind, and as there is now considerable probability that we may get the pilot on board before the day when the tickets commence—the 17th—in which case number one wins, that number has been sold for £3 : 10s., whilst the last number, forty, has fetched only 2s. 6d. They are just now selling away, but when the interest in this lottery flags I expect another will be got up. It will be pleasant to have a short passage, and there is probably no vessel that could give us a better chance of such a voyage than the *Independence*; but the noisy set we are with are not much to my taste, and I cannot help thinking we should have been, on the whole, more comfortable in a vessel not in the line of packets, if well chosen. The ladies, however, bear the turmoil better than I could have expected. We are now anxious about the ice, which in the present fog could not be seen till near. The wind, being southerly, is warm, and gives no indications that can be relied on. The degree of heat of the water is from time to time consulted, whilst watch is constantly kept on each board and on the fore-castle. Some of us would like to see an iceberg, and may regret having missed the sight of seven whales, which for a few days were floundering about near us, and spouting up water as high as the topmast yard. I am one of the regretters. If we get back our wind, which has left us in the lurch just now, we may expect to be on the Banks to-morrow.

*June 12.*—It was not long before we regained our wind, and we have been, since I last held the pen, dashing on at a furious rate, and so as to put the ladies' steadiness to a severe trial, but which they have stood

quite as well as I could have wished. Yesterday was a trying day. We were going before the wind about fourteen miles an hour, with a rolling sea that occasioned many trifling and laughable accidents, and one that might have been serious—a fall that consigned one of the gentlemen to his bed for the day. He seems, however, much as usual to-day. We were not without our share in the mischances of the day. Whilst we were sitting quietly in the ladies' room, our room nearly turned topsyturvy, and the egg-basket having been compelled to part with the remains of its cargo, the eggs were tossed backwards and forwards till the carpet was quite ready to put in the frying pan, where it would have made a delicious and magnificent omelet. The state of the room was not discovered till your mother was going to bed, about eleven o'clock, and a long purification had then to be commenced. To-day the wind is more moderate, and now has just become rather less favourable, but we keep our course, and still go on at a good speed. Should we experience no reverse, we may be in New York within the three weeks. I do not expect to have anything further to report as to our voyage, except its termination, which I trust I may have soon to record in the last page of my letter.

*June 16.*—Two or three days of calm and of light, baffling winds have disappointed our hopes of an early termination to our voyage. They have, however, for the most part been mild, pleasant days, which have, I trust, enabled the ladies to gain a little strength after their harassing troubles. Your mother is the last to get up her good looks. Aunt Alice comes on more steadily, and Anne is much as on land. We are hovering upon the coast, and with a tolerable wind might be in port within the twenty-four hours, but we are hardly moving through the water.

*June 21.*—Calm and baffling winds again delayed us. We arrived, however, on the 18th, with a fine sunny day, which gave us a very favourable view of the city and the approach to it. From really cold weather we had thus a sudden change to mid-summer sun in lat. 41—that of Paestum or thereabouts. Yesterday we had the passing of our luggage on the deck of the *Independence* at mid-day, the hardest and hottest work I have had this many a day. The old ladies still suffer from the motion of the land, and Aunt Alice hears all the turmoil of putting the ship about in the night. I have written to my brother<sup>1</sup> to advise our arrival, the London packet ship sailing on the 20th. If I hear anything likely to interest you much by the 23rd I will write to you again. The alarm here is very great, and some seem to think all the great American houses in England must fall, not excepting Baring and Brown's. There is, however, much variety of opinion on the subject. My old clerk—Parker, now in Patry's employ, and come over to look after their affairs, has just called on me. From him I gather that all sorts of excuses are made for not remitting, and that he finds he can do little or nothing with those he has to press. They may pay, perhaps, twelve or eighteen months hence. Parker thinks if one of the houses falls all the others must follow, they are so linked together by the reciprocal holding of each other's paper. I will now stop my pen for the present, and with all our loves to you, Margaret, and the children, and kind regards to Swinton and Ford Bank, subscribe myself,—Your affectionate father,

THOS. LANGTON.

Mr. Heywood's parcel is delivered—to him and to his brother my best respects.

<sup>1</sup> Zachary Langton.



LETTER from ANNE LANGTON. Ship *Independence*, at sea, May 26, 1837. Addressed to Mrs. WILLIAM LANGTON.

I have just been making the experiment of writing in a perfectly recumbent position, and I find it so practicable that I am going to write you the first sheet of my journal-letter reclining, and give you a few of the particulars of our first setting out, which, as unimportant, may have faded from our memory before we are able to write. After we had really ceased to distinguish any one figure on the crowded pier, even the little blue bonnet raised over your shoulders, which remained the longest conspicuous, we went below to make our arrangements in our cabin with as much method as possible, placed all the most necessary articles in the most come-at-able places, and succeeded in making our interior look tolerably comfortable. We then revisited the deck to wave our handkerchiefs to New Brighton and Bootle friends. I saw Ellen Briggs' signal, and many a well-known spot on the opposite side of the river. Whilst making my preparations I discovered the little note you had put within my basket, and I cannot tell you how soothing it was to meet thus unexpectedly with these affectionate words from you. The little book you found on the table had occupied the book-case since the 17th of April, but I took it out to place within it the lines I subsequently met with. It was very calm all the afternoon, but our Captain gave such a long look at the barometer, and, moreover, looked so very cross, that I had some fears for what might be coming. We were all able at the summons of the dinner bell to go down, and eat a little cold beef. The elder ladies then retired very prudently to their berths. I wish I had done so too, as I should not then have

taken cold. But I took one turn too many on the deck with my father, and felt it immediately. After tea, and seeing my mother fairly in her bed, I retired to mine. The trying operation of undressing did upset my mother, and nearly so me, but the next morning's report of the former was not very unsatisfactory, and I had had some very comfortable sleep, as, I believe, was also the case with the others. My first adventure was on stepping into my berth. I was alarmed, and thought it would be quite impossible to sleep on such an uneven surface; but inserting my hand underneath the mattress, I drew forth nothing less than a *lamp*, which proved to me that something of the M'Carty spirit may reign on board a crack American packet-ship. The next morning my cold was oppressive, and the weather rainy, but still calm. I was well in my berth, and remained there. The ladies' cabin is uninviting—it is quite a nursery. Six children and their nurses occupy it almost constantly, the floor is strewn with playthings, and the table covered with porridge basons. The noise, of course, we cannot shut out, but we shall probably get accustomed to it. It continues calm, and we continue tolerably well till towards evening, when it changed. I heard the word capsize, felt a sudden and very great descent on one side, followed by the most tremendous crash, and the exclamation—"All the wine bottles are down!"

I suppose they were empty ones, as little sensation was occasioned by the event. I suppose such are of frequent occurrence. I have heard another breakage this morning, when we ought to be better prepared, as the motion has continued considerable since last night. I had occupied myself as much as the light would allow me all the day, and resisted dozing inclinations. I was thoroughly tired and sleepy at night, and never,

I think, enjoyed more profound slumber, though occasionally roused to a sense of my rocking state.

This morning I made a sort of half dressing, in order that I might visit my poor mother, but I was not long before I came to my berth again. I could do her no good, not even talk to her, as she is in an upper berth, and I was not up to standing. I think she did not look quite so wretched as I have seen her before. My father has been sick, and my Aunt Alice also, but she dozes a great deal. Of course I have as yet made very few observations on our fellow-passengers.

*Sunday evening, May 28.*—I can now report of us at the end of another two days. We are all improving, but some rather slowly. Yesterday I was able to dress myself and attend a little on my mother, and to remain up with a book and my needle alternately, if my head was but supported. My mother and Aunt Alice still very miserable, though a degree better. There was a greater muster of ladies in the cabin, and I sat there a little in the evening, and was amused with their chattering, for as people come to life again they get very merry. I can now say something of some of our fellow-passengers, and though, of course, I may be able to give a much better account of them later on in the voyage, I may as well touch upon them. I shall first introduce you to Miss Ledger, as you have heard her name before. She is going over alone to join friends, having never before traversed the Atlantic. Since her berth was taken she had a serious illness, and broken a blood-vessel, so is in a weak state, and only appears amongst us occasionally. She is too languid to make much acquaintance with, but as she revives I hope to do so. The other inmate of her cabin is a most homely person, but so kind and attentive to her sick companion that I forgive her vulgarity. Moreover, she can tell

me something of our future home, as she has been settled nineteen years in Toronto, and has just been over to see her mother and other friends in Staffordshire. But I have no sympathy with her on one point—she does not wish ever to see England again; and it gave me quite a melancholy feeling to think it possible that a person could be so weaned from all the dear ties of home, even by the possession of another home and family of their own elsewhere. It cannot be a capacious heart that has not room for more than one affection.

Mr. and Miss Ormstead are my next acquaintances. They are returning from a tour on the Continent, where Mrs. Ormstead has died, and though they went for a long period are returning at the end of a year to New York. They have been just posting through England, and have seen more of my country than I have. The young lady appears scarcely twenty, is an only child, very chatty, and I daresay will be a pleasant fellow-traveller. Then follow Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell and two babies, for the elder cannot walk. The lady very young and very lively, a little childish—I think originally Irish, but must have lived more in America. Another lady has three children, very noisy ones, and two maids, who are constantly filling up our cabin. I have not heard the name or made any acquaintance, for she is amongst the very sea-sick. One more lady remains, whose name I have also not heard, but she is quite of the mirthful order. Were this party an English one I should say they were all somewhat vulgar, but as Americans I feel I cannot judge them—still, I think some of them must be so. To-day all have been better. My mother and Aunt Alice have each taken a turn on deck, and been able to retain a little nourishment. I expect to see them quite bright to-morrow if

good weather continues. I suppose we must call this good, though rainy squalls are perpetually coming on. We occupy the house on deck occasionally. My provoking cold makes me a little afraid of myself, and not able to enjoy as much of the open air as might be. Yesterday my mother was able to open her little box from Sophia Ralph. It contained several little elegancies—ivory tablets for my father, a case of scissors, needle-case, etc., etc., in silver, and a gold vinegarette for my mother, and a beautiful gold pencil-case for Aunt Alice.

I think I have now told you all the events, great and small. I will descant upon the comforts and discomforts another day. The Captain tells me there is little likelihood of our speaking a ship. By the bye, I suspect that for some cause or other we are not in favour with the Captain.

*Wednesday, May 31.*—In the first place I will comment upon my own last remark. I think I had very little foundation for it, but our adverse winds, and sometimes our total want of wind, make him look a little flat and cross. It is now a week since we sailed—a very long one it appears. I am again reduced to the recumbent position; we have a high swell and wind dead ahead, and everybody looks deplorable. My father, after rising, has taken to his couch again. My mother remains quietly in hers, but is pretty comfortable there. Aunt Alice is the most ailing of our party. She is very weak, and has had a great deal of fever once or twice. She has been dragged on deck two or three days, but reclined chiefly when there, and to-day it is out of the question. We have felt quite uneasy about her, and she has been very despairing. Happily I have been able to look after and tend the invalids till to-day. Now I will give you a few hints in case you or any of yours cross the Atlantic. Bring

a small mattrass with you, for the aching of the bones when obliged to toss upon a hard, uneven surface for some days is no trifling inconvenience. My cold may have made mine more tender than usual. In the next place, bring a few bason cloths, for one is apt to look upon one's wash-hand bason with perpetual mistrust. Do not be quite dependent upon the packet library for reading. I am glad that we are not so. There are odd volumes, pages torn out, and the key sometimes not forthcoming. But I should strongly recommend avoiding a crowded packet-ship, and therefore one of great repute, or perhaps a packet-ship at all. A person should have health and spirits to stand the noise, the confusion, and the merriment. Go where you will, there is no quiet, except on a day like this, when the wildest appear subdued. There is certainly a great advantage in being able at all hours to call for anything—gruel, tea, lemonade, sago, or anything you can well think of. I do not say all good of their kind, our tea, for instance, is neither good nor hot; coffee better. Your dinner when brought to you may often be cold, and when your appetite is the most delicate a great, big, fat slice may be sent to you. These evils would diminish when you could sit at table, but the dreadful length of the meal would be worse. I said to one lady, who had been at the least two hours, "I am sorry for you having had such a tedious sit." "Oh, I like it," said she, "and I have been eating all the time." The dinner benches having backs you cannot move without disturbing several, unless you can get to one end. I wish these backs were on some of the stools, for unless you are lucky enough to get one of the sofa corners there is no rest for the head except such as the elbow and hand can afford, and rest for the head is often indispensable on board a ship. We have great comfort

from the spare pillows. I think my father and mother are very well off in their airy cabin ; its entrance from the gentlemen's cabin I care now little about, and the atmosphere is much more agreeable than within ours, at least on a breezeless day. The evening noises are great, but we have those of the children to our share. I do not find the American ladies improve upon me. Our English fellow-passenger, Miss Ledger, appears a sensible, clever, and lady-like young woman. I know a few more names—the mother of the three children is Mrs. Laythorpe, the young wife without children,—Leonard. The Laythorpes have been living for a few months in Manchester, and only fixed to leave it the Saturday before sailing, during which time they had to give up housekeeping, send off about half as many packages as we have, despatched to Montreal. The lady has travelled a great deal in America, and made many voyages. I have made so few acquaintances amongst the gentlemen that I shall reserve them for another chapter, if they be worth one.

*Sunday, June 4.*—I last wrote on Wednesday, when we were beginning to toss about a good deal. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday we continued to have a great deal of motion, and suffer accordingly. Sometimes it is my mother, sometimes Aunt Alice for whom my fears and sympathies are greatest, and sometimes I bestow a little compassion upon myself, though I have great reason to congratulate myself, upon the whole, that I remain as well as I do. I can scarcely now separate the events of each day so as to give you a regular journal, nor are they quite so uniform as to tell you our regular mode of proceeding. I generally contrive to perform the great task of dressing myself in time for breakfast, which meal appears about nine o'clock. The transatlantic ladies eat cold and hot

meat, fried or pickled fish, or oysters to this first meal, which seems with them a substantial one. A cup of coffee and a cracker is generally mine. The eggs are dubious, and your basket was a most wise and acceptable addition to our sea store on my father's account. The last few days I have nursed my cold in the cabin, and as it is really cold on deck this course is best—for this torment does not disappear; I shall be glad to get into a more southern latitude. I often sit in my mother's cabin when she is in bed, and at other times take the corner of a sofa, and a little chat. Now and then we have a gentleman visitor, and the Captain always pays us a visit each evening, and sometimes keeps us up till near twelve. This is after I have seen my old ladies in bed, and being perfectly at liberty to rake. I do not always take advantage of it, but sometimes creep to my hole before the *conversazione*. There is often a great deal of animated nonsense going forward, which I like to hear—a pint bottle of Vin de Muscat, or something of that kind, makes its appearance, and we close another of our thirty days. I often have my work in my hand, but I do not accomplish much. No other lady seems so well provided with employment, but almost all seem to look a little enviously at my resources. I do not improve my acquaintance with Miss Ledger. She looks too ill to be talked to, especially by one who does not hear well, but I feel much interested about her. She has told me she is leaving all the friends she has *proved*, but going where she expects to have a very near one, though she appears to have left herself free to decide finally after she gets to New York whether she remains or not. Her illness had been brought on by excitement on a rather sudden determination upon this step. She is a bold woman to come alone on such an errand,



and in such a state. Our youthful heiress—Miss Ormstead—is also engaged, and has her swain on board with her. He is likewise the sole heir to a large fortune, but I suspect has more dollars than ideas. He has only been detected in general conversation once, and then on the interesting topic of boots, shoes, and slippers. Mr. Ormstead tells us that people do not marry for money in America, as in England, but I listened to a conversation on “matches” between two others of our company, and I think the word fortune occurred as often as it might have done with us. Mr. Ormstead is a capital fellow-passenger. He has plenty to say and says it well, has not only words at command, but ideas also. I see nothing of any gentlemen but such as, having friends amongst the ladies, are privileged to come and sit with us. Our stewardesses are sufficiently important personages to be introduced to you. They are two—a tall, dark-brown, elegant but immovable person, who performs her duties coldly and slowly, and the jet-black wife of the steward, whose countenance is never-varying sunshine. She smiles good-naturedly at every one, however much trouble you may give her, and accordingly wins all hearts. I often pity the poor attendants, they must be kept in constant motion. Four large meals each day to be served, and de-served, besides sundry messes perpetually called for by one or other of our forty passengers, and not always the greatest degree of patience manifested. They ought to be well paid. I scribble away, dear Margaret, but I never tell you what I have been thinking about. That I leave you to imagine. Sometimes all appears very odd and dreary to me, and I can scarce conceive that all the occurrences of the last few months are real.

*Wednesday, June 7.*—It is a fortnight to-day since

we bade you farewell. It appears an age, but I dare say, when all the adventures and miseries of the sea-voyage are left behind, and its various trials and endurances are blended into one, the monotonous period will occupy but a small portion of our retrospective view. Even now, when all is present to me, I feel, whenever other circumstances may lead to such a step, I shall encounter a second voyage without hesitation. Sunday was the last day on which I wrote—it was really a day of rest, the motion being much more easy than we had experienced for some days. My mother had suffered so much from the motion the day before that she remained in her berth all the day. On Monday we were all thrown back again, and I was myself so ill that my father officiated as lady's-maid, and got my mother on deck for a short time. Tuesday was a delightful change. We had the wind for the first time really in our favour, and it was delightful on deck, my cold being also really improving. In the evening too the water was phosphoric, and the Captain summoned us on deck near midnight to see the sparkling waves. It was very beautiful. To-day we have a slight reverse of fortune—a calm or very trifling wind, drizzling rain all the day, and very close below stairs. I have taken to my pen, having tired myself with my other occupations. I took out my screen one day, but I soon gave up the hope of accomplishing it. Not but what I have often been well enough for the work, but all other circumstances are unsuited to it. My own knee is my only work-table (my writing-table too), and many other things combine to upset my scheme of providing your table with a memento of our passage across the Atlantic. Yesterday, when our spirits were high, a lottery was set on foot—a usual amusement, I find, on these voyages. The tickets, 10s. each, are

marked each with six given hours of a given day, between the 17th and 25th of June, and whoever has drawn those hours on which the pilot comes on board will have won the purse—the first ticket including all preceding days. This was immediately sold by auction again for £3:10s., and as the wind and weather may change the expectations regarding our arrival, more buying and selling takes place, and the interest and amusement kept up. They have a most noisy game on deck as another pastime, called shuffle-board, which I do not intend to describe, but only complain of. I have not sailed in many ships, but I think I never heard any creaking at all equal to what we have almost constantly. It varies, however, somewhat; but when the boards nearest to your head are the noisy ones it is really at times distressing. I, however, sleep uncommonly well—I wish others did likewise. I do not complain either of my mattress, now that I have studied its geography, and having acquainted myself with the situation of its hills and valleys can bring the elevations and depressions of my own person to correspond and fit in.

*Sunday, June 11.*—Two or three days after I last wrote passed drearily enough. We were on and about the Banks, where the weather is seldom good. A drizzling sort of fog prevailed, and the air was so chilly as to drive the gentlemen into the round house, and oblige the ladies to retreat to their cabin, which was often crowded and comfortless. My mother and I seldom contributed to fill it, until towards evening, as I take my station in my mother's state-room until her levée. But when we are all assembled, without the intrusion of any gentlemen, we muster eighteen—children crying, nurses scolding, and ladies' voices endeavouring to overpower the other noises, rendering the confusion

most oppressive. There ought certainly, in these packets, to be some arrangement for the accommodation of maids and children, so as not to interfere so greatly with the general comfort. Speaking of the voices of the ladies, I must tell you that the American twang, as we hear it here, is very harsh and grating from the females, the men have it in a much less degree, and I think many speak very little differently from Englishmen. However, I find they talk of the *brogue* with which the English speak English, so I suppose they like their own accent better than ours. I know very well I ought not to form a judgment on American ways and manners from the specimens in our ship, but though I know it I feel that a certain impression will have been made, and as I shall most probably see little more of the people, that impression will be in some measure permanent. Yesterday and to-day have been finer, and admitted of our airing ourselves on deck. The refreshment was delightful, for we were beginning to sicken again. My mother, however, to-day, feeling her head very indifferent, and the motion considerable, does not venture to stir from her berth. Aunt Alice is better, but has her bad days. I have never been very sea-sick, but I have not rallied so well as many. Except on very best days my head will not bear being unsupported many minutes together with impunity, but I have preserved my locomotive powers in some degree since the third week of our voyage.

We are now hoping to have entered upon the last week of it, and rejoicing in the possibility that a continuation of our present wind would bring us to New York about the middle of it, though we must not build too certainly upon all circumstances being favourable. We certainly, on the whole, have very great reason to congratulate ourselves on the weather we have had.

The first twelve days we experienced contrary winds, but they were still such as to enable us to advance very steadily. We have only been twice becalmed, once for a day, and once for part of one. We have experienced no tempest, though sometimes a very unpleasant degree of roughness; but if that was bad enough we may be truly glad it was no worse. Latterly our winds have been favourable. During the drizzly weather they were rather too light, and we got on slowly, but now we are going at nine, ten, and eleven knots an hour. For three nights, whilst in the region where ice may be looked for at this season, our Captain was constantly aloft, and a degree of anxiety was to be traced in his countenance. Now we are beyond its reach, I believe, and we have seen none. I had certainly entertained a desire to see an iceberg, but I saw many in such dread of them that I was forced to give up the wish. I have mentioned how very fortunate in most respects we have been in weather. I should, however, tell you there have only been two days sufficiently warm and sunny for us thoroughly to enjoy the deck. I have often called it going on deck when we were only sitting in the round house, or just wrapping up for a short time on deck.

*Wednesday, June 14.*—The evening of the self-same day on which I last wrote the breeze freshened, and we had something more in the way of a gale than anything hitherto experienced. It was, however, directly in our favour, and though the motion was very considerable I experienced no unpleasant effects, and no one any serious ones. Indeed, I think it was the first day, at least for any length of time, that I felt really well, and I made my first public appearance at the tea-table, where the cups were slipping about, and streams often meandering about the table.

We had some ludicrous scenes that evening from tumbling gentlemen and rolling ladies. But whilst we were amused with these things in the cabin we little thought of the confusion we should find presently on retiring to our state-rooms. Scarcely anything had kept its place. Some of our doors were blockaded with boxes, and an ingress effected with difficulty. I was a few minutes on deck to see the majestic way in which we cut through the waters. Later in the night we shipped a sea or two, but I think all in the morning agreed to have enjoyed a very average degree of sleep, nor did any one tumble out of their berths, though the tenants of the upper ones on our side had but little feeling of security. The misadventure in my father and mother's room he has recorded in his letter. The following evening I had a moonlight walk on deck, the water scarcely more than rippled, and yesterday it approached still more to the semblance of a looking-glass, but we were creeping along so very slowly that the delightful tranquillity was not duly appreciated. The repose too seemed to conduce so little to the renovation of my mother that I felt I would willingly exchange it again for the wind of Sunday, which drove us on our course at the rate of thirteen knots an hour, and had it continued might have brought us within sight of New York ere this. To-day we are getting on somewhat better, but still very quietly, yet I hope we may keep next Sunday in New York. It is three weeks now since we embarked. My cold is departing, but it yet subjects me to many restrictions on enjoyment. It has been well doctored by some of my fellow-passengers, who have sent me various remedies. One of our ladies, Mrs. Laythorpe, has an inexhaustible store of drugs and recipes, and no one can have a headache, or any other ailment, but she produces some cure or other.—

I was here summoned on deck to see some whales sporting in our vicinity. There appeared to be several, from the spoutings of water in various directions. Two only came near to us, and allowed us occasionally to see the length of their backs. They were fine fellows certainly, but as our experience cannot at all measure distances at sea, neither can we form very distinct notions of their size. I was well pleased to have seen them.

*Friday, June 16.*—I have been just thinking that it is the christening to-day at Swinton, and we may think of many of our friends assembled together. I wish we could have kept the day in New York, but we shall not fail to drink Master Frederic's health, and send many a thought and kind wish back amongst you. Since my last date we have gone on rather slowly, but so quietly that we cannot at all complain. Part of yesterday we went at the rate of nine or ten knots an hour, and yet the motion was scarcely perceptible. The sea was so waveless that a slight breeze carried us swiftly through the unresisting waters. I could really enjoy the sea such weather as this, if those I most care for were capable of enjoying it too. My mother improves very little. She suffers most from her head, and from weakness, and coldness proceeding from this last. As Miss Ledger improves we become better acquainted. She is really a nice person, and one I should like to meet again at some future day. Mr. Ormstead continues our most amusing companion. He constantly reminds me of Mr. Weld in having something to say and relate upon every subject. But he is more fluent and animated. Everybody is beginning to pack and prepare for disembarkation, though there is small chance of that taking place before Sunday morning. Still, to-morrow, I suppose, we shall probably see land again. We have had several vessels in sight to-day, which looks like an

approach to port. I shall perhaps not take out my pen again at sea.

*New York, Tuesday, June 20.*—I have to bring up my journal from the 16th. On the 17th a pilot came on board, which excited great interest both before and after. Every one would gladly have deferred the arrival for three hours to disappoint the owner of ticket number one. But the happy winner was a joyous exception. His countenance, however, with every other person's, fell sadly when the pilot had delivered his budget of news, for the gloom of the mercantile world exceeded what had been feared, and much general and individual calamity was communicated. Towards evening the lighthouses were distinguishable, and we anchored about eleven o'clock in the outer bay. Land, which had been only distantly seen before dark, was now visibly not far, and I determined to be up with the dawn, like a dutiful child, to greet my mother earth after our long separation. Accordingly, I was on deck to receive the sun's first rays, and enjoyed it very much as long as there were only the pilot and seamen, but not quite so well when the Captain and other curious passengers began to appear, feeling that a lady had not much business there at that hour. I afterwards only peeped up occasionally, but I had had a good gaze at the shores of the new world, and had seen a beautiful packet-ship weigh anchor just before us, and sail majestically by our side. This ship had been an object of interest to us all the day before. It was the *Silvia de Grasse* from Havre, and had sailed a week before us. Some of her passengers and ours had parted at Paris, and the same steamer conveyed both on shore. The ship was not to come into port for many hours, so after the visit of the health officer we went up the bay of New York in a steam-packet. The bay I had, unluckily, been told several times was



equal to the Bay of Naples, and my first impressions were therefore those of disappointment. But it is very beautiful in its own way, and so totally different from the one it was compared with that the comparison was absurd. The shores are rich and gay looking—the islands seem to enclose it, leaving openings only, which sometimes show more distant portions of the coast stretching out beyond. The opening of the North river is very bold, and the many sails and gay steamers going in all directions made the scene as bright and brilliant as that of Naples perhaps. Mr. Ormstead would have persuaded me that the Bay of Naples was grand but not beautiful. When he spoke of its barren volcanic rocks he forgot its orange groves. It was about eleven o'clock, I think, that the goodly company on board the *Independence* touched the shores, and dispersed, though several of the gentlemen reappeared at the hotel. Miss Ledger we did not part from so soon. She became one of our own party until Captain Nye should have informed her friend of her arrival. As he expected her by this ship of course he was supposed to be on the look-out, and at hand, but about ten hours elapsed before he made his appearance. This was owing to mistakes, very simply accounted for afterwards, that she was kept thus long in suspense, and the latter part of the time was spent in dreadful anxiety. It certainly did appear very strange, and whilst I sought to soothe and encourage, I certainly feared that all was not right. Melancholy, indeed, would have been her situation had our fears been realised; moreover, I dreaded a recurrence of what excitement and agitation had before brought on. However, at length we were relieved, and the following morning we parted with mutual feelings of interest, and a promise to let each other hear how the next few weeks have sped with each.

We had every mark of respect shown us on arriving. Every British vessel had its colours flying to welcome its distinguished countrymen, and we returned the compliment by drinking the Duke of Wellington's health at dinner. On Monday morning, the 19th, I accompanied my father to the ship to superintend the examination of our baggage. It was a tedious, fatiguing, and patience-trying affair, and I could not help thinking we were more narrowly scrutinised than others, though nothing in the end was objected to. My poor father had to go to bed after it all. My mother had been chiefly in bed since we landed, or on the bed. A blister has been applied, but the head continues so suffering that she now talks of leeches. I wish she would be better without them, as she is pulled down quite enough. This morning I took a stroll with my father up Broadway, looking in at one or two booksellers, and seeing the annual exhibition of the paintings of native artists. There are two rooms pretty well filled, but offering a greater proportion of very indifferent things than the exhibitions of Liverpool and Manchester. From the catalogue, a very large proportion of them appear to be pictures already in the possession of different persons, and contributed for the occasion. I believe I must again recur to the voyage, for I have omitted to name one of the passengers, namely, our friend Fury. For some time she was a most miserable creature—not sick apparently, but totally at a loss to know what to make of it. Latterly she was at home with everything and everybody, and even gained courage to bark at the sailors, some of whom were evidently obnoxious to her. Two days before we landed we received hints from different quarters that there was a conspiracy to throw her overboard. Fancy how fidgetty we were, and how glad that this

alarm had not occurred earlier on the voyage. Here we do not feel her to be very safe, as the regulations regarding dogs are very strict. If seen abroad, though with their masters, they are to be destroyed, or their masters heavily fined. We keep her very close, and it will be a happy day for her that we get to Blythe. The last week's sailing was so beautiful that had our party been well I could have wished the voyage prolonged. As it was, I looked on the water the last evening with feelings of sadness. It was the love of an islander gazing on the ocean perhaps for the last time. But there was scarcely a joyous countenance amongst us on the morning we dispersed. Most had serious cares and apprehensions. Some their painful retrospect, others fearful anticipations. Mr. Ormstead, returning without his wife, would willingly have exchanged with any of them, and as I looked round I thought perhaps we, with all our cares, were amongst the most tranquil in mind. In the afternoon of Sunday my father, Miss Ledger, and I went to church, and some of us heard a sermon on the times, with strong remonstrances against female extravagance. I did not, through the double defect of ears and eyes. The latter took the example of the former, and closed for a bit, but I was roused by the cordage and pulleys of the ship sounding in my mind's ear. I have felt less motion since landing than I ever did before after sailing. Shall I give you a chapter on American hotels? I think not—this is more particularly a journal of the sea. Suffice it to say, that I find reason in some respects to rejoice that we have been hardened by previous travel. As regards cleanliness, however, we have no reason at all to complain, quite the contrary.

*Wednesday, June 21.*—Another day has given me nothing to record. My mother is scarcely any better, and our plans, of course, are unformed. Some of our

fellow-passangers call on us, and testify some interest in the prosperous progress of our bold adventure. Indeed it must appear a more adventurous step to our new friends than to our old ones, for these have only seen my mother in her present state. It has been raining to-day, as it might have done in England, and there is nothing as yet very un-English in the heat. I must be drawing my journal to a close, as my parcel will go to-morrow. You will see that I have accomplished little in the way of work to send to my friends—pairs of slippers for Charlotte, Ellen Briggs, and Miss Birley,<sup>1</sup> and a purse for Mrs. Cardwell. For the dear ones at Seedley I thought I was getting an American toy in Urania's miroir, but I find it is only copied from an English one. My journal, at least, is for you, and with it my best love, and many kisses to the dear little trio. In church on Sunday afternoon, after landing, this verse in the Psalms occurred: "The waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly; but the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier." I hope I had a thankful heart as I repeated it.

EXTRACT from LETTER from ANNE LANGTON to her brother, WILLIAM LANGTON, June 27, 1837.

"We have had rather a busy week. Our first entrance into the new world has involved us in a somewhat romantic adventure. This morning we have been assisting at a wedding, I as bride's-maid, my father giving the bride away. My journal will have made you acquainted with Miss Ledger, the most interesting of the fellow-tenants of the ladies' cabin.

"It appeared so desirable that her marriage should

<sup>1</sup> Margaret, daughter of Richard Birley of Blackburn, died unmarried, 1844.

take place soon that we rather forwarded it by offering ourselves as her supporters, and we really feel glad to leave her with her husband instead of in so very peculiar and uncomfortable a situation. Mr. Johnson, the hero of the tale, though I daresay a very excellent man, and probably an agreeable companion, is not the sort of person you would imagine inducing a lady to take so spirited a step. A great degree of resolution it must have required, which I trust will be rewarded. I have often smiled at finding myself so unexpectedly engaged in acting the part of friend to one whom a month ago I had never seen. But she very naturally clung to her compatriots in a strange land, and we were soon interested for one so curiously situated, and a superior sort of person in herself. Our wedding was quiet, though not quite so much so as I would have arranged it. We had all the formalities of a breakfast, but a small party only to attend. My father, myself, and Captain Nye, who had had the charge of the young lady, being the only attendants at church, and two other gentlemen guests afterwards. The bride insisted on presenting me with a bonnet for the occasion, and therefore I thought it incumbent on me to have the rest of the costume appropriate. I thought I looked extremely genteel in a lavender pelisse and white crepe bonnet—*tout à la parisienne*. We must get up a wedding at Peterboro decidedly that these things may have a second appearance. I reflected on my birthday (June 24th), that those who were thinking of me would little imagine how I was employed, my head full of matrimony, and also my hands and my feet, writing notes, cards, etc., etc., and running up and down New York in search of kid gloves and white satin ribbon. I must have been in twenty shops before I could meet with any decent white satin ribbon, and

half that number, I am sure, without finding any at all, neither could they tell me where it could be met with. Yet there were silk and ribbon stores. In some places they said they had had a few pieces from England, but they were gone. A watch ribbon for my father I found it impossible to obtain, though I tried hard. You might put one or two into a corner of the next box. However, there are things to tempt one here too. I made a purchase of a Chinese paint-box containing two saucers of gold, one of silver, a dozen of various colours, besides empty saucers, colour rubbers, etc.—indian ink, and a dozen or two brushes, for all which I gave three and a half dollars.

"June 29.—Yesterday my father and I dined at Mr. Walker's, to whom Mr. William Rathbone had introduced us. We had a very pretty drive of ten miles to a very pretty place, looking upon the East river, as they term the water dividing us from Long Island. As we came home at night the fireflies were as beautiful, though not quite so numerous, as I have seen them in Italy. We were entertained likewise by the musical notes of the American frog. We have crossed the ferries of the North and East rivers, and viewed the city from each side of it. On the New Jersey side there are some beautiful walks, which run along the side of the river. They are private property, but the owner is amply repaid for throwing them open to the public of New York by the produce of the ferry, which partly appertains to him. On Long Island there is a pretty suburb, and a walk skirting the edge of the cliff, from which the bay, no doubt, will look well on a clear day, but for my three country "outs" we have had a hazy atmosphere. Perhaps my sketch-book may begin to be of use soon. We are hoping to be able to start soon on our further journey, but my

mother is as yet very little able to bear fatigue. The Manorys have given us a most friendly greeting. Miss Manory, though a little older, looks as well and as gay as ever, and the old gentleman looks much like what he used to do, though somewhat more infirm of course—he is ninety-two."

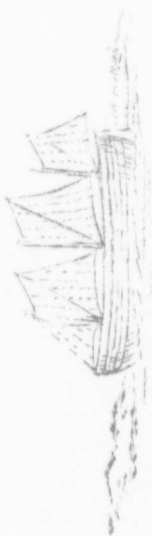
The family were detained in New York by my grandmother's illness, but finally, early in July, continued their journey. They went by the Hudson river to West Point, their first resting-place. The scenery of the river, and of West Point itself, they admired greatly. After two days' stay at this place, they pursued their journey by the river to Albany, from there by railway to Schenectady, and on to Utica. At that place they embarked on the Erie canal, and after two days arrived at Rochester, then a large flourishing town, though it was only fourteen years before that the first settler built himself a house on the spot. The party went on to Niagara by a horse-railway on the American side of the Lake, sleeping at Lewistown. After a short stay at the Falls they embarked at Queenstown on a steamer for Toronto. Here they were again detained by the illness of my grandmother; but finally they were able to travel by steamer to Port Hope, and from there by a "jolting road" to Rice Lake, from which place a steamer conveyed them to Peterboro, up the winding Otanabee river. Here my uncle met them, prepared with an escort of friends to take them up to Blythe; but my aunt's illness kept them another week in Peterboro, and it was not until the 14th of August that they set out for their new home.

EXTRACT from LETTER of ANNE LANGTON to Mrs. WILLIAM LANGTON. Date, August 22, 1837. Peterboro.

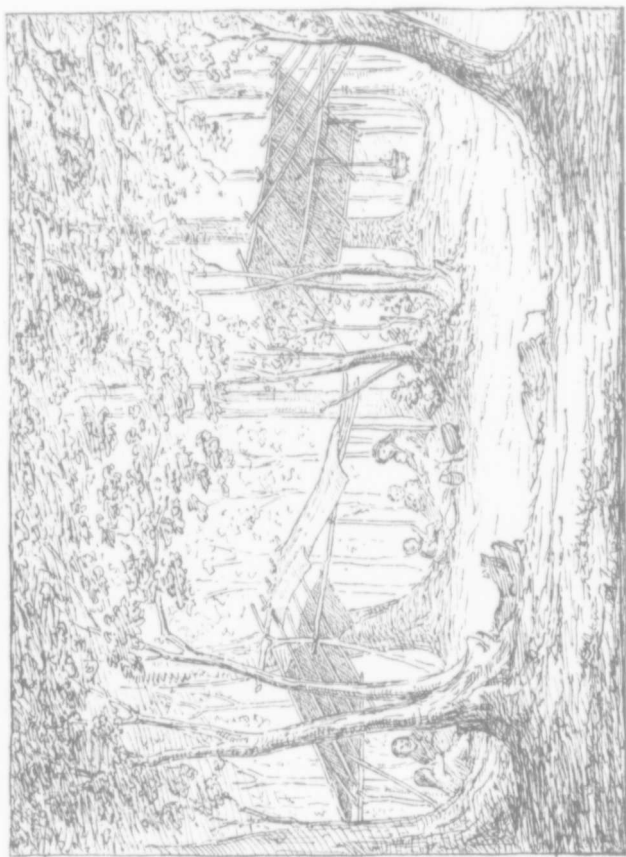
"During the week we remained here the good people of the neighbourhood came dropping in upon us all the time, and others of them would have done so, but either thought we were gone before, or supposed we were staying longer, so that some of John's friends and acquaintances still remain to be made known to us. At length, on Monday 14th, we set out for Blythe, John having arrived on the Sunday evening, accompanied by Need and Atthill, to convey us to our home. The party was increased by a Mr. Dundas, a young Scotchman coming out to make trial of the backwoods, and spend a couple of years with Dennistoun, whose cousin he is. We had made his acquaintance at Peterboro. The six miles to Mud Lake were performed in Mr. Shaw's "*carriage*," which is a waggon, having the reputation of a little spring in the benches, but how it was gained I cannot make out. My mother was mounted on a horse contributed by Mr. Fortye for our convenience, and well it was, for her head would never have stood the jolting of our vehicle. She began, however, by taking a much longer ride than there was any occasion for. She and Mr. Dundas contrived to lose their road, and, when it was discovered, John had a good run after them to bring them back. The scattered party, however, at length assembled, and embarked with a fair wind on Mud Lake, to make the most of which a blanket and a sheet were hoisted as sails. Do not suppose, however, that the *Alice*<sup>1</sup> had

<sup>1</sup> *N.B.*—The *Alice* was a present to my uncle from my father, and was named so after the latter's eldest daughter, then four years old. My uncle bought her at Kingston, after he reached Canada the second time in 1836.





THE "ALICE."



INDIAN ENCAMPMENT.

such homely accoutrements. We proceeded prosperously on our voyage, landing at Billy M'Que's to refresh our crew, and give time for a storm to blow over. His Indian family were all squatted on the ground, in and about a little bark hut they live in in summer in preference to their house, doing absolutely nothing, with the exception of one old squaw who was weaving a basket. In this state of complete idleness I believe they are always to be found. After contemplating this scene of laziness (I was going to say wretchedness, but they looked happy), for about an hour, and emptying the contents of our prog-basket, we re-embarked and entered Bobcaygeon river just as the evening closed in. I very much admired the scene, the wood on either side is very beautiful. We landed at the foot of the rapids, and walked about half a mile to our night's quarters, where we were very comfortably accommodated, though in a still more primitive way than at Peterboro. This was at what was Mr. Sawyer's house, which is now a tavern. The young men all took up their quarters at the old town at the foot of the rapids. About midnight there was a rapping, and an enquiry made whether we were arrived. Another party of backwoodsmen had come down to take us up our own lake.

"The following morning was most unpromising, and we found we were to have a complete wet day ; but it

He writes :—"My boat is a four-oared man-of-war's 'gig,' that had been used by Commodore Barry for one summer. When I get home, and have given her a new coat of paint, I will not fail to christen her the *Alice*. I am sorry that my good taste will not permit me to paint her red, but if *Alice* particularly requests it, I may be induced to paint her name in red letters. The *Alice* is 20 feet long, and strongly though lightly built, and with four oars I would back her even against the celebrated *Calypso*. She will carry a very considerable load, and even with two oars, or a pair of sculls, she will be lighter than my old boat. When rigged as a schooner she will appear as shown in the sketch.

cleared up about twelve, and about two o'clock we set out on our boat voyage, the ladies in the *Alice* accompanied by John, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Dundas, my father in the *Calypso*,<sup>1</sup> a smaller boat, belonging to Mr. Wallis, he, Dennistoun, and Savage, being his companions. About six o'clock the two boats reached the little landing-place at Blythe, and we beheld our home. Our rowers all disappeared without waiting to receive our thanks, though I am sure they deserved them. Three times had some of them been down to Peterboro, some to Bobcaygeon to meet us, to say nothing of a cold collation prepared for us on Sturgeon point another day when we were expected, and did not arrive. At last, however, after all delays and disappointments, our long journey is accomplished. John looked very proud when he handed his mother into his little mansion. His arrangements for our accommodation are very snug. Wallis has contributed a bed, and some carpets. My mother and I sleep in the larger bedroom behind, Aunt Alice in the small one he used to occupy at first. My father has the hammock put up every night in the sitting-room, and John himself has a tiny apartment curtained off by a sail from the ante-room. Here we expect to make ourselves comfortable for perhaps a couple of months, or maybe more, if as many unexpected delays occur as have occurred in the preparations at "the big house," as our future habitation is elegantly denominated. But I suspect we shall summon the plasterer from above to stop up sundry chinks which let in daylight now, and would admit quite too much of the winter blast for such delicate inmates as we are. And now you will ask what I think of the spot that has been so much talked of, and thought

<sup>1</sup> *N.B.*—The *Calypso* figures in many lake expeditions and adventures, afterwards owned by my uncle.



THE LANDING STAGE, BLYTHE, 1837.

of amongst us. Upon the whole very much what I expected to think of it. The picture my mind had formed of the Lake is really very correct; that of Blythe was so much more particular in all its details that it could not be quite so exact. What most strikes me is a greater degree of roughness in the farming, buildings, garden, fences, and especially roads than I had expected. But when one looks at the wild woods around, and thinks that from such a wilderness the present state of things has been brought out by a few hands, and how much there is for those few hands to be constantly doing, one's surprise vanishes, and one rather wonders that so much has been done, than that so much remains to be done. This is certainly a country where the virtue of patience will not languish for want of exercise. All around one sees such a multiplicity of things that should be done, and the ways and means to accomplish them so few and small. One can scarcely realise the difficulty there is in making away with the wood that encumbers the ground, except when a good burning is practicable, until one sees it lying. The stumps must give every place a rubbishy appearance, and the spreading roots prevent anything like a smooth pathway. Besides which stones are very abundant, and a great obstacle to a neat garden. As a few years might make me forget the chief differences between here and England, I will tell you now in case any of our friends should come out, that the paths and roads require that the supply of strong shoes should be good. Even in fine summer weather the forest will be wet, and you can never reckon upon going any distance without encountering some spot where the water has been dammed up by some wood obstruction. Most probably some more strong shoes will be my first commission. The open-

ing to the Lake is at present small, and we only see from the house a small straight piece of the opposite bank, but this winter's chopping is to bring to view a pretty point of land on our own side, and if the opening does not become too great, there will be a decided improvement in the picturesque. Our house is a good deal above this, about a couple of hundred yards off.

"When you reach the summit of the hill, a short way behind you look down into the main part of the clearing, and a pretty little valley it is. I have made no sketch of the place yet, but shall be on the look-out for a good point for one. At present I have been well occupied in looking about me within and without, penetrating the forest to the beaver meadow, or diving into the depths of the store-room, where the traces of womankind may now be seen amongst the possessions of the bachelor. Occasionally I give half an hour to the garden, where at present the weeds are more abundant than the plants; but we are to blame in some measure for this, the bustle of preparation for our house having thrown some minor matters behind-hand. But I must resume the narrative of our proceedings. Our first day was spent in looking about John's premises, and making ourselves at home. On Thursday we went by invitation to see Fenelon Falls, and dine with Mr. Wallis. My mother and Aunt Alice were neither of them well, and stayed to nurse each other. Mr. Savage, who is a recent addition to the community, and not I suppose certainly a permanent one, came to help John to row us up. The sail is pretty, the river as you approach the Falls very pretty. The Falls themselves would be well represented by the sketch of the Canadian Fall at Niagara, except that the mill and its works would bear a very different proportion to the water to what any buildings about



FENELON FALLS.



Niagara do, and, if coloured, the beautiful emerald green in the one must be a somewhat yellow line in the other. We walked about, and visited the new house of our entertainer, which is rather further advanced than our own. Its situation is extremely pretty, on a little plain, thinly scattered with trees, affording a natural lawn, and with very little trouble it will be quite a pretty place. It is almost made to his hand. At dinner we had Captain Dobbs and Mr. M'Laren. The latter, whose name will be new to you, fills a secondary situation in the increasing establishment at the Falls, superintending the commercial department there. After dinner I made a slight sketch of the church while the gentlemen took their second glasses of wine, and we then re-entered the *Alice* to return home. On our way we just missed the novel adventure of bringing down a buck in the water. We saw two swimming across the lake, and followed both. The first, however, only with a view of seeing him land, but of the second we had a good chase, and were within three or four yards of him, when he gained his feet. Had we perceived him a few seconds earlier we should have had success in the chase, and I should have taken some of the credit to myself, being on both occasions the one to perceive the branching horns of the game. It was about dark when we landed here. On Saturday John left us to go to Windsor, and give directions about the sending up of our packages. I believe they are all arrived there in apparently good condition.

"The short journey they have yet to perform presents more difficulties than all the rest, so we may yet have occasion for the philosophy we prepared ourselves with when we committed our property to the perils of so long a journey, and we find some difficulty in getting up a few things we were obliged to leave at Peterboro,

the carrier who comes to Bobcaygeon three times a week promising to bring them up the next day, and they have not yet appeared. Where there is no competition people consult their own leisure and pleasure, and for these everybody must wait. On Sunday we received some visits from the neighbours, first Mr. Haig, the occupier of M'Andrew's farm, and afterwards Mrs. Hamilton and her daughter, escorted by Wallis and Dennistoun.<sup>1</sup> Maxwell is not nearly so pretty as I expected, I should not call her at all more than nice looking. Perhaps if one were to see her animated she might improve upon one, but she certainly did not appear to me at all dangerous. They have been on Cameron's lake about a month, and though returning to Peterboro for a time, will be again established here before winter. Since this no incident has occurred, save a change of weather. It was beautiful, and we had been dining as usual in the tent on Monday, when, a short time after we had quitted it, a sudden gust of wind tore it to the ground in a minute, and levelled some of the fences. It subsided again directly, but a little thunder and lightning and torrents of rain ensued, and for the last two days we have been enjoying a good fire. If the storm has laid the mosquitos and other insect plagues we shall all rejoice, for we were annoyed by them. It is comforting to perceive that residents of a longer standing suffer less, and when the land is pretty well cleared

<sup>1</sup> *N.B.*—The Hamiltons (frequently mentioned) were among my uncle's first friends in Canada. Major Hamilton had bought land on Cameron's Lake, and had also a mill in Peterboro. He died at Peterboro in 1836, and his widow joined her son Garwin on Cameron's Lake. Other sons came out later, and the friendship was maintained. Of the daughters, one was married to Mr. Fortye; another, Maxwell, married Mr. Dennistoun, and Maggie, many years younger than the rest of the family, was a great favourite at Blythe as a little girl. She had a sad married life afterwards.

they apparently disappear. There were none at Peterboro, or at least very few. When the black fly makes its attacks you are kept on a perpetual smart all over the exposed parts, but I do not think they bite through thick leather as the mosquitos do, neither are the effects quite so permanent. . . . I must tell you that 'Fury' has been brought to endure the presence of a cat. She peeps with great interest into the basket where John's cat is just nursing a kitten."

EXTRACT from a LETTER of ANNE LANGTON to  
Mrs. W. LANGTON. Sept. 1837, Blythe.

"I am not a backwoodswoman yet in this, that I cannot feel easy when near the end of my stores. John thought my anxiety very laboured when I saw the bottom of my candle box. Here they have been so accustomed at times to be without things, that they take matters over and above easily. There is a very good store at the Falls,<sup>1</sup> that is as good or better than any in Peterboro, but the difficulty of getting up goods makes the supply uncertain, and you are not to be surprised when told that the tea and rice is still on Lake Ontario, and that there are only three candles left. What should you think of a few pounds of tea coming at the bottom of a sack (without paper) and a few rusty nails at the other end of it? When I mention any of these primitive ways of doing things it is with the desire of making you more exactly conceive the precise style of civilisation to which we have attained, not at all in the spirit of a grumbler, indeed it would be absurd to make grievances of such things; and after fastening your window with a string round a nail, or

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jamieson owned the "Falls" at this time, and had a "store" there.

shading it with a boat flag for a month, you are very apt to forget that there is any other sort of hasp or blind. As I have not seen the interior of any backwoods establishment save this (for Wallis' being the tavern is not a specimen) I cannot give you much information. When we made our calls at Peterboro we were, with one exception, not received where the family were sitting. Painted wooden chairs are the most frequent, rush-bottomed ones being in the more elegant drawing-rooms. A papered room, save in the Government House, I have not seen since we entered the province. At the inn at Peterboro a looking-glass about the size of my hand, making my face as round as Alice's, used to depart from me every day, for the use of some other person, and then re-appear. We used always to take our chairs with us to the dining-room. At our tea-table at Toronto a larger sized teapot acted the part of urn or kettle. Not a drawer or a cupboard is to be seen at any of the inns. To set against this, when we dined at the Falls, and I was shown upstairs to take off my bonnet, the toilet was neatly covered with white linen, and a little jug of warm water brought me with as much tidiness as could be seen in any house in England. As for provisions, bread, potatoes, and pork, with the produce of the dairy, are the unfailing ones, but they have been varied here by beef, venison, pigeon pies, and vegetables, of which there are, or may be, plenty in their seasons. There is very little in the way of fruit. John has some gooseberry and currant trees planted in his garden. These grow wild in the woods, and of the wild raspberry there is such plenty that they are sold at a shilling a pailful, gathered, I fancy, by the Indians. We were too late for these, and the cranberries, which are likewise plentiful, are not come in.



THE ORIGINAL BLYTHE.

At Toronto there was a miserable display of fruit in the market, and at the Government House, where there was every other luxury and elegance, one dish of the most wretched strawberries was the only fresh fruit they could give us in the middle of July."

EXTRACT from LETTER of THOMAS LANGTON to his son WILLIAM, dated "The New House, Blythe. Nov. 29, 1837.

"Two days after our coming into the house the carpenters left us, but we expect the principal one back in a few days to finish off and complete some jobs not begun, to repair our breakages, etc., etc. In the interval unpacking, siding, putting two or three rooms in comfortable, habitable trim, have been the regular occupations of your mother and Anne. Our own room had been previously prepared. Miss Curren's was the next in order, which she came and occupied on the 26th, on which day also we hanelled the parlour by reading prayers there to a full congregation of *ten* besides ourselves. I was, however, not in my best way, and absented myself. All the rooms are very comfortable except Anne's, I think I may venture to pronounce them warm, but as yet we suffer a good deal from smoke. We hope by degrees to remedy this defect, though I fear we shall not entirely remove it. Anne's room, a small one over the entrance, intended to be heated by a Franklin stove, with a chimney-pipe let into the dining-room flue, let in more smoke from that flue than it took away, and filled the other two bedrooms. We have been obliged to close the flue, and give up the room as a bedroom, and reserve it for a store-room, which will be much wanted. In the meantime Anne has the travelling bed put up in our room, and dresses

in Aunt Alice's. Another arrangement may be made by and by, but for the present this answers very well.

We were for a long time in alarm about servants. In three different journeys to Peterboro, and as many to Ops, it had been one of John's principal errands to engage a servant, or servants, and from each he returned unsuccessful.

I suppose there is the same reluctance to go so far back, as we have formerly found in Liverpool servants, to engage far out of town. Whatever the cause might be, we could get no experienced servant from the more settled part of the country, and we had seen specimens of the new arrivals which were very discouraging. In these circumstances Anne, John, and I were one Sunday afternoon about a month ago, going over the new house, and planning what was to be done, when a spare, decent looking young man of the labouring class came upstairs to us, whom John greeted by the name of Dan. I immediately recollected the name as one of John's first acquaintances in the backwoods, and found it was actually Dan O'Flyn, who had come to repay John some money he had lent him last summer, to enable him to procure some comforts for his old father and mother, who had come out to end their days with him.<sup>1</sup> John had great doubts about the eventual repayment, but the case was so parallel to his own that he could not resist the appeal, and Dan now honourably redeemed his credit. He also

<sup>1</sup> *N.B.*—My uncle made the acquaintance of Dan O'Flyn on his first visit to the Lakes in the autumn of 1833. He observed a disconsolate figure sitting by the Lake, who informed him that he had cleared his land two months before, and had come down to the Lake for the chance of seeing a fellow-creature. His land was two or three miles off. He at once took my uncle under his special protection, took the position of mentor and valet de chambre, my uncle in return taking charge of his money for him. Dan was very useful in assisting the process of bringing up the goods of the settlers who came from Peterboro together on that occasion, Mr. M'Andrew, Mr. Jamieson, and my uncle.

applied for work, and in the course of the conversation it appeared that a daughter had accompanied the old folks, and though on enquiry we found she had never been in service, we proposed that she should return with Dan in the ensuing week, and be employed in scouring and washing out the rooms. The pair came to us about a week afterwards, and we found the sister a neat, cleanly, hard-working woman, who though without experience as a servant, had been accustomed to have things comfortable at home. She is cheerful, disposed to be chatty without being too familiar, and without a spice of blarney. We have been all very much pleased with her, as you will judge from my having allowed her so much room in my letter. She had no objection to engage herself to us in any capacity, and left the wages to ourselves. I am only sorry she cannot be a permanent assistant. She is married, and her husband permitted her to accompany the old folks out, saying that if she gave him encouragement after having seen the country, he would follow. So that whether he comes out to her, or she returns to him, we cannot expect to retain the services of Mary Scarry beyond the ensuing summer.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime Mary makes us very comfortable, and we shall have time to look about us for a successor to her. We have a fine, cheerful, active lad of about sixteen, whose time is pretty fully taken up with cutting wood for the fires. The consumption of wood is awful. We burn, I think, on the average, about two trees per diem. A man goes into the bush, selects his trees, cuts down one, divests it of its branches and top, which are left there to rot. The oxen then drag it to the house, or woodyard. It is

<sup>1</sup> Mary Scarry remained in Canada and was off and on the faithful servant at Blythe for many years, called in also on special occasions of trouble. She accompanied the family to Peterboro also in 1851.



then chopped into lengths according to several fire-places, and the lengths are then split except a few which are left whole for back logs. In a general way, I think two-fifths of each tree is chopped into chips, a mountain of which accumulates about the yard, and is very difficult to get rid of. When the clearing is extensive they have to fetch the logs a good distance. One may say there is only one sort of tree suitable for firewood, for there is always one sort which burns better than the others, and as long as there is a supply of that sort, no other will do. When that is exhausted the next best burning wood will be the only sort. As yet the sugar maple blazes away on every hearth. Its destruction is of less consequence, as the maple sugar, if made by hired labour, comes as dear as good Muscovado; but the sugar-making takes place when the settler has little to do, and if he has an active family they may supply themselves with sugar at a trifling expense. If they are not good contrivers, or have burnt their maple trees, they must do without."

EXTRACT of a LETTER from THOMAS LANGTON to his son WILLIAM. Dec. 23, 1837, from Blythe.

"In this province the insurrection was suppressed and tranquillity restored before we had heard of its interruption. How they are going on in Lower Canada you will hear almost as soon as we shall, for at this season our communications are very slow and limited. We have as yet only heard the first rather uncertain account of two villages having been attacked, and I believe burnt, and probably the disturbances may not be subdued there so quickly as here, though from all I can hear there can be little doubt of the ultimate result being the same. Our invitations had gone forth to

twelve gentlemen to dine with us on Christmas day, when on the 19th a message was received from the Government by Wallis recommending the whole force of the townships of Fenelon and Verulam being called out to beset two roads into the Lower province—one about ten miles, the other about forty miles north of Fenelon Falls, by which it was thought Mackenzie might endeavour to escape. Dennistoun was therefore detached with twenty men to occupy these passes, where he would have had to bivouac in the woods with the thermometer at  $12^{\circ}$  below zero, and John was to have relieved him with twenty others on Monday the 25th for a week.

“This put an end to our party, as we expected; but this morning intelligence was received that Mackenzie had succeeded in escaping into the States, so that there was an end to our soldiering for the present, and our party again revived with but short time for preparation.”

EXTRACT from JOURNAL LETTER of ANNE LANGTON to W. LANGTON. Dec. 5, 1837. Blythe.

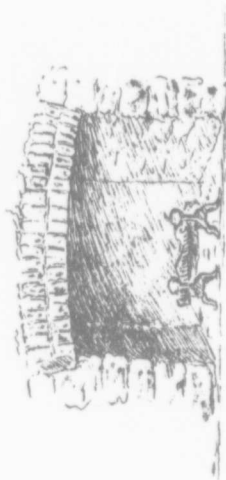
Speaking of her father's state of health and the difficulty of getting suitable things for him my aunt writes:—“My mother too contrives him a very tolerable variety of puddings, and even produces an excellent custard without eggs.”

Alluding to the transport of their furniture and other goods my aunt writes:—“Some articles have escaped damage in an extraordinary manner. The sofa, which travelled in its best cover because it was such as could not be removed and replaced, looks as if it had never been out of a drawing-room. The heavy things have generally suffered more than the light ones—the latter are mostly safe. . . . Besides being com-

forts, the old well-known furniture makes one feel very much at home. Some of the new articles, too, are most comfortable. The Turkey carpet makes our floor very warm, and wherever it lies, there I think we shall sit in the winter season."

From same Letter

"*December 11.*—Since Dec. 5th we have had the temperature down to an average or ordinary winter degree, but it has got some thirty to fall, and I will not boast of how we bear cold too soon. The snow is accumulating about us, and I daresay the next frost will be a more enduring one. The operation of underbrushing has been going on for the last month at a short distance, but all I saw of it was the fire in the wood at night. It had a curious appearance to see at times a solitary tall tree glowing from top to bottom in the midst of the darkness of the forest. Chopping is now about to commence, and in this I feel very much interested, as a supply of firewood is of the utmost importance. Hitherto the day's labour has supplied the consumption of the day, and when one sees what a heap of logs disappear in a day, one can scarcely trust to the exertions of one's chopper. It is rather a troublesome sort of fuel from its bulk, its weight, and the rapidity with which it is consumed. Our logs are mostly three or four feet long, and measure, at least some of them, as much in circumference. The lodging-room fireplaces are of much smaller dimensions, but when a whole party have to be kept warm you must have such a glow as shall oblige the circle to be a wide one. The unsplit wood makes the most economical fire, and a very warm one, though with a mixture of the split it is more bright



FIREPLACE.

and cheerful. One large, sound, bark log is, however, indispensable, and such a one we have sometimes as takes two to carry it. You will think that my thoughts run entirely upon heat and cold, but I can tell you they have been in the glue-pot a great part of last week, or buried in the contents of drawers and boxes. We do not yet make very perceptible progress towards a settled state, but I know we are advancing, though through very tangled paths. Meanwhile we are sufficiently comfortable to take things rather easily. Our sitting-room, though not yet adorned with its cotton hangings, has all that is essential to comfort. I could very soon reconcile myself to its dark-looking log-walls, but the rough plaster between the logs is annoying. It is for ever crumbling down, and makes everything dusty. Our eyes have become a little familiarised with such things, and our room looks to me a very handsome one, in spite of its rough barn-like appearance. The large Gothic window, however, improves the general look of the room. . . . Baking is almost a daily operation, but not such a troublesome one in Mary's hands as it was with our former bakers. The usual plan in this country is to mix flour with warm salt and water, and set it by the fire to rise. But it must be carefully watched, the temperature must be kept even, no easy matter in cold weather. They usually put their vessel within another closed vessel of warm water, but even then it requires great attention, for if the fermentation is too long delayed it becomes sour. Moreover, when ever the right degree of fermentation is attained, then and there you must mix your loaf at whatever inconvenient season it may happen to occur. If the operation is successful you have very good bread, but there is great uncertainty in it. Our Mary's method is to boil hops in the water before mixing her rising, and to

add a little maple sugar. This has the effect of making the rising keep a week or ten days, and there is not the necessity of the fermentation taking place soon. You may therefore bake several loaves in succession from the same rising, and the last will be as good as the first. In case of failure there is always a frying-pan cake to resort to, namely, unfermented dough baked in one, about half an inch thick. I fancy it is bad taste, but I am very fond of these cakes, and were I keeping house for myself alone should occasionally have one as a variety. At present we bake in a bake-pan, but an oven is one of the things we intend to have next year.

*December 15.*—Our separation from the world seems to have ceased. Mr Wallis and Mr Hamilton called here this morning, and I suppose our opposite neighbours might venture to visit us now over the ice. The road through the Bush is the best communication with the Falls. The ice above here is always uncertain. Our thermometer has dropped below zero, but the weather is calm and beautiful, and we contrive to keep the house very warm. In every way I have felt quite as cold in England as here, excepting that for ten minutes after my morning's toilet the tips of my fingers ache as they never did at home.

1838

EXTRACT from a LETTER from THOMAS LANGTON,  
from Blythe, Jan. 10, 1838, to his son WILLIAM.

" SINCE the end of the year we have had quite warm weather for about a week, every appearance of snow had disappeared from the ground, the lake if not impassable was dangerous, and the roads were become next to useless.

" This loss of the means of communication, if continued, would be ruinous to the country ; but we have now again a pretty sharp frost, the snow falls, and it is to be hoped that in a few days the farmers, though rather late, may be able to take their produce to the towns and pay their debts to the storekeepers, who in their turn may be able to settle with their merchant, and everything may get again into the regular routine. . . . As for our post office at the Falls I fear the insurrectionary movements in the Province have delayed the arrangements and, indeed, thrown the whole department into confusion, for two if not more of the postmasters in the interior are supposed to be disaffected and have been put in confinement. Of the insurgents who escaped to the States we have very contradictory rumours ; one says that they are coming with increased forces to renew the attack on Toronto, another that the Government force is going to attack

them in the island in Lake Erie, where they have taken refuge."

My grandfather then goes on to speak of the cost of the house and living.—The verandah still remained to be done, the stair rails, and some plastering—inside ; the rubbish outside to be removed, the ground to be levelled, the half acre of house-yard and kitchen-garden fenced in, and a couple of out-buildings put up. "John's" cattle and men having been used almost exclusively for the work of building and preparing the house, the farm work had naturally got behindhand. Horses too had to be purchased for this work. My grandfather thought the house promised to be warm and comfortable. He gives an analysis of expenditure. Over two months on the journey from Liverpool to Blythe, including the cost of apparel, stores, etc., transport of furniture, etc., from Manchester to Blythe, etc. Four months they boarded with my uncle, paying £2:10s. a month per head. My uncle proposed to pay them, when boarding was reversed, £1:10s. a month, or 1s. a day—not quite so much as he was supposed to cost!! My uncle's cows came to the house to be milked—they took care of milk and churn, paying my uncle for the butter they made, and having the milk and cream for their share of the dairy. My uncle sent them small supplies of potatoes, and to prevent their getting frosted in transit they were carried in the winter in a sack, soaked in cold water, and allowed to freeze, becoming in a few minutes a kind of mackintosh, in which the potatoes might be safely conveyed.

My grandfather speaks of his own failing health and symptoms, and asks for some black currant jam to be sent in the next box from England, to relieve his thirst—one of his painful symptoms.



In a letter of February 15, 1838, my grandfather gives a list of his son's stock at that time: two horses, four milch cows—one only in milk, two draught oxen, one young bull, a young ox, a young heifer, and a year-old heifer as tame as a lap-dog, and very pretty. One of the cows gave such rich milk that it was put at once into the milk mug. There were pigs also. Of dogs, "Fury" and "Rock," their parlour friends; old "Jezebel," deaf and blind of one eye; "Mowbray," a young hound, and a cat. Provisions were then very dear, especially flour. Scanty food and cold weather brought hard times for the animals in that country. Ploughing three years after clearing the land, the smaller stumps come away of themselves, continued yearly more and more come out, except pine, hemlock, and some of the largest oaks, which have to be pulled out. Trees chopped in summer rot a year or two before those chopped in winter. My grandfather gives anecdotes of Irish labourers, settlers, who, after starving on potatoes and buttermilk in Ireland, are very hard to please. They will not eat beef pie if there are potatoes in it, or fried bullock's liver. One woman declared she could not drink black tea, it gave her a stomach ache, and she must have *green*. He remarks that "Ally" showed her good sense by considering going to Canada a formidable undertaking, while "Din" would be "up to anything."<sup>1</sup>

EXTRACT from a LETTER, December 1838, JOHN  
LANGTON to his BROTHER.

"I am quite disgusted with the *Spectator*, believing every lie against our Government and talking of the horrible atrocity of hanging two or three rebels and

<sup>1</sup> His grand-daughters in England, Alice and Ellen Josephine.

pirates. They appear to me far too lenient ; if they had shot all the American sympathisers last year there would not have been so much sympathy this winter. But they have seen their error, I think, at last, and I should not feel any surprise or grief to hear in a day or two of the 162 prisoners taken at Prescott having sympathetically dangled in a row in sight of their friends at Ogdensburgh. One thing is certain, that if the Government pursue their old plan of letting the prisoners go under promise of being good boys for the future, they will be troubled with few prisoners for the future, and perhaps that might be the best way of settling the question.

“ Really, John Bull appears to be a very good-natured fellow to go on exchanging civilities with the Yankees, when they are permitting all the refuse of their population to muster on our borders, and harass us the whole winter with their petty incursions, without taking any effectual steps to keep them in order. They have a few troops upon the border, and a steamer on the lake, and every now and then, when no expedition is really on foot, they make a sham of arresting a few men, who are liberated the next day on bail. But when anything is really in the wind they are as blind as moles. The late expedition against Prescott was fitted out in a port, where their Commander-in-Chief, General Wool, was. It sailed, not on a dark night, but openly by day, in two schooners and a steamboat, with a great quantity of arms and ammunition and three cannon, but not a foot was astir. The next day Gen. Wool sent information to this side, and the day after sent his steamer to see where they had gone to ; of course knowing very well that in the meantime they had landed. The fighting at Prescott went on in sight of the opposite town of Ogdensburgh,

where a great multitude were assembled on the bank to enjoy the spectacle, and responded to every shot from the sympathisers cannon by cheers. When the marauders are so openly countenanced by our friends opposite, in spite of the virtuous indignation of the *Spectator*, I can see no harm in treating the good people of Ogdensburgh to a spectacle of another kind."

ACCOUNT of the SETTLERS in the townships of  
Fenelon and Verulam, 1838. By THOMAS  
LANGTON.

I begin at the North. *The tailor, Allen*, who had given up his half lot and removed to Fenelon Falls, where he could take a town lot and follow his trade, has married a widow from the States. As they have no family I think he is wise to give up farming and stick to his business. His wife's younger son is our servant, and a nice, handy, cheerful lad he is. We are well pleased with him.

*William Jones* is from the sister isle, where he is supposed to have left a wife behind. He might have sat to Capt. Marryat for the character of Dick Short in *Snarley-yow*, as far as regards taciturnity. He never speaks but when spoken to, and then in the fewest words possible, except indeed the Inniskillen dragoons should come in question, when he is copious and eloquent. Not that he ever belonged to the corps, I should think, for he has nothing military in his bearing. He goes off to his own farm without notice, and comes back to work for John again without being asked. This might not suit with many, but he knows so well what is wanted, and is so steady at his work, objecting to nothing, however disagreeable, that both parties seem suited.

*Alexander Daniel* is from Glasgow or thereabouts,

formerly a calico printer, then kept a shop, at which all his old fellow-workmen were customers, and had a thriving trade. "Why did you give it up, Daniel?" I asked. "Why," said he, after a pause, "it makes no matter telling any lies about it, I was too fond of my own whiskey." When he first came out he bought a "United Empire" right, and got it located in a different neighbourhood, but taking work with John, and preferring this situation, John made interest with the surveyor, and got his location changed. He appears very grateful to John. About a month after we got here his little boy came one day to beg a little whiskey and some sticking-plaster for his father, who had had his thumb nearly chopped off. John went immediately to him, and found the thumb nearly severed at the joint, and hanging only by the skin and tendinous part under the thumb. The joint was not injured, except that a little cartilage was shaved off. John bound it up, secured it with splints and a bandage, and in ten days afterwards I found him chopping, and it has long been quite well again. He has had many severe hurts and mishaps, but is getting on well. He had sold his best milch cow to Jordan for twenty dollars, and the day before she was to have been delivered a tree he was chopping fell and killed her. Jordan agreed to take half the dead cow at the rate of the price he was to have given, though not half as much worth in beef as a milker. "But people are here very good to one another when any misfortune happens," said Daniel. He has recently had another mishap. One of his team of oxen had got into a neighbour's field, and was fired at with salt, as "breachy" cattle are sometimes dealt with. But either from forgetfulness or design the ramrod was left in the barrel, and the poor ox was so injured that Daniel was obliged to kill him, and not

only him but his companion, for oxen do not work well together unless brought up together. Daniel's spouse is a capital helpmate for a backwoodsman, for she can do the work of a man, as well as her own domestic duties.

*William Jordan.*—The next to Daniel is a very religious man. All his family attend prayers at John's, whatever the weather may be. Understanding that he was going to kill a pig, and the family being very cleanly, I asked him to let me have some black puddings, but he told me he never made any from conscientious motives, that it was unlawful to eat the blood, which was the life. I argued the matter with him in jest, and spoke of the superiority of a giblet pie, which contained a pudding of the blood, and he then rather inadvertently coincided with me, and said goose blood was the only kind he was fond of. Jordan drinks no spirits, not from conscientious, but from prudential motives, for he does not object to his children taking them occasionally. But he knows that if he begins it is not certain when he may stop, and that he is only safe by never taking any. The surveyor who came to run the lines, as mentioned before, slept at Jordan's, and speaking with me the following day he said he thought the Jordans were a very worldly-minded family, for that the girls were up before day-light, cleaning the house, making the fire, and preparing breakfast. The honourable gentleman is a Hibernian, and probably considers it best to take things easily in this world. Jordan's worldly-mindedness will, however, get him on well. He has a large, active, and industrious family, and is the most thriving amongst the neighbours.

Next comes *John Mensies*, who has bought half a United Empire lot from John, and has begun to clear it; but he is now engaged as John's regular servant.

and lives in a house built for him on this farm. He is an intelligent and able man, and the most useful one John has yet had ; but he has too good a place of it, I think, and has got the length of John's foot.

*Fergusson Duke*, or "Fargy," as he is called, is the last comer, and a nice little civil and active man, of whom I have a very good opinion. Whether he will stick to his purchase, when he finds himself thrust off the eastern half of Menzies' lot on to worse land, heretofore William Langton's, I do not know. I should hesitate in his case, but John means to keep him to his bargain.

I will, to conclude, give you an instance of the delicacy and refinement of the backwoods. John had killed an ox, and your mother wished to have the bladder to cover her pickles, or preserves, and I had desired Menzies to save it for me. In the evening there was a rap at the door, to which Anne answered. Menzies wanted Mr. Langton. What should she tell him?—He had got something for him. What is it? Cannot you leave it for him? "Oh, to-morrow will do," said Menzies, holding his hand behind his back, not willing to exhibit or name such an article to a young lady.

*Concessions*, strips of land running nearly N. and S. of about the breadth of  $\frac{7}{8}$  of a mile. The whole of the concessions in a township are divided again by lines at right angles at the distance of  $\frac{3}{8}$  of a mile, and marked and numbered from 1 upwards, the lots being thus described. First or second (and so on) Lot in the 1st Concession of Verulam (and so on). All of these concessions are set apart to be sold in half lots—the E<sup>n</sup> or W<sup>n</sup> half of such and such lots. There is an Act which says that a post or landmark once placed, whether numbered right or wrong, shall

remain. Every purchaser must abide by his lot, whether the error is to his advantage or disadvantage. Where the concessions are sold in half lots the rule is that the E<sup>n</sup> half is to be reckoned from the E<sup>n</sup> post and the W<sup>n</sup> half from the post belonging to the next concession. The numbers of the lots in one concession should coincide with the same numbers in the next concession. In one case the lots did not coincide, and when discovered the owner of one lot had his land shoved down upon a neighbour, some getting better land and some worse. In some cases the result was a hard one, for a man who had cleared and sown his lot might have to give it up, and get half of the next lot uncleared.

The case of Fergusson Duke is mentioned in the account of the settlers.

The letters during the early months of 1838 were mainly concerned with the illness and death (on May 4) of my grandfather. He had many weeks of pain and suffering, borne with great patience and fortitude, before the end came.

Two or three short extracts from my aunt's letters may be of interest as descriptive of the country and climate.

"May 19, 1838.—We had the 'burn' a few days ago, rather an exciting proceeding, and at times exceedingly picturesque and beautiful. There was nothing to prevent our giving due admiration to the grandeur of the destructive element; it was accomplishing nothing but good. The brush heaps are immense piles, and blaze up furiously. There was a little wind in a favourable direction, which carried the smoke into the wood, where it mingled with the trees very beautifully. The main part of the conflagration was over before night, but the

scene was very pretty when the darkness came on, reminding us of an illuminated amphitheatre. Unfortunately a thunder-storm with much heavy rain came on the next morning, or the consuming of the encumbrance of the ground would have gone on for a week or more. . . . I am struck with the variableness of our climate during the spring and autumn months. I think the changes are quite as frequent and quite as great as in England, but the clear and fine weather prevails more here than with you. Now, however, on the 19th of May, there is never a leaf except on John's gooseberry bush, which is just beginning to show some green. We have got, however, some very ornamental wild flowers in boxes in our drawing-room window. My mother's garden will not make much way this year, owing to the amount of rubbish yet about the place. John has made his very nice and neat this spring."

*Probably November.*—"I like to see the Indian canoes fishing on the lake. We had a most beautiful scene the other night. The lake was beautifully calm; there were nine fishing canoes flitting up and down, each with its very bright light, reflected like a little column of fire. The moon, accompanied by a very bright star, was approaching her setting, and shed a broader and more silvery light over the lake. Pretty nearly from east to west, too, was extended a beautiful arch of the aurora, right through the zenith, and the north was also luminous. It was a lovely scene."

The greater part of the year 1838 was taken up with finishing the house-building, out-houses, clearing away rubbish, etc. They were fortunate in having settled near them an excellent carpenter, on whom they could thoroughly rely.



## SUPPLIES FROM ENGLAND

During the first years of the settlement of the family on Sturgeon lake it was necessary to send them supplies from England. The purchases for these boxes and their packing was a source of great interest to the nieces in England. Their safe arrival was a source of great anxiety at Blythe. Sometimes, owing to the state of the lakes or the roads, their transmission from Coburg or Peterboro was considerably delayed. In connection with these packages, as well as other goods, there are frequent allusions to "Purdy's."<sup>1</sup> Purdy was an enterprising Yankee, who had built a mill on the Scugog river, with a very large mill dam. In 1832 this dam had broken, flooded lands, and raised the lakes, and had taken, when repaired, two months to re-fill. Purdy had also a store-house, in which packages were kept until they could be conveyed further north.

The chief articles which it was either impossible or difficult to procure at that time in the colony were: material for wearing apparel of all kinds, shoes and gloves of different sorts, sheeting, household cloths, kitchen utensils, pins, needles, sewing cotton and silk, druggetting, sheets of wire-gauze, balls of string, nails and other articles for carpenters' use, currants, raisins, dried figs and prunes, sago, tapioca, lime-juice, etc.; also mould candles and soap. A filtering machine was also sent, and some panes of plate-glass—neither of them easy to pack safely.

<sup>1</sup> *N.B.*—The site of Purdy's mill is that on which the small town of Lindsay now stands.

JOURNAL for October 1838. Blythe, Fenelon Falls. ANNE LANGTON.

Did you ever write a journal with the intention of sending it to any one? I think it would be difficult to do it with simplicity. One is tempted to act sometimes with the page in view that has to be written, and a day's proceedings would be often diverted from their ordinary course by the recollection that they were to be recorded. It is different in stirring scenes where events are leading you; but in the employments of everyday life, especially when information has to be collected, inferences drawn, and an average estimate to be formed from the narration, journalising does become difficult. I made a commencement in the summer, but circumstances soon interrupted me, and I am sorry that I have lost the two or three days' record, for I think it was rather characteristic of the backwoods, and amongst other singular employments presented my mother manufacturing putty, and myself glazing windows. I keep a sort of Diary, and have just been looking over some of its pages to see whether a few extracts would be interesting; but I do not find it so, I will give you, however, the last week as a specimen, which commences with the first of October.

"*Monday, Oct. 1.*—Quite a hot day. John at the Falls in the morning. Captain Dobbs came in to tea, and played a game of chess with John.

"*Tuesday, Oct. 2.*—Foggy morning, but a warm day. The Captain goes after breakfast. John busy with the coach (my canoe) making a keel for it, I cutting out shirt necks for him. In the evening busy sail-making.

"*Wednesday, Oct. 3.*—Got some work done. Taylor the carpenter comes to his work again. Got letters from England from William and Jane Birley.

"*Thursday, Oct. 4.*—John goes in the *Alice* to the Falls with corn to grind, comes back to a late dinner in the scow laden with lumber, bringing the *Alice* in tow. Got a good deal of work done to-day. The woods are burning on both sides of us, and the wind keeps up the fires. Mr. Hoare, Mr. Jamieson's father-in-law, coming up the lake, called for a boat or a guide, had a luncheon and direction to the Falls.

"*Friday, Oct. 5.*—Unusual occurrence. A tourist landed. We showed him backwoods hospitality, and set refreshments before him. His name was Captain Ayre. He had known Richard Langton in Greece, at the time of his death. I settled my accounts, and walked to the woods to see what the fires were doing.

"*Saturday, Oct. 6.*—Got all the mosquito curtains and blinds stowed away. A change of weather. Thunder and lightning, some heavy rain, with promise of more, which will be good for the conflagration. It brightens towards evening, and grows colder; we have a little fire. John glazed a few panes, but the putty does not hold out."

This is a transcript of my journal, which is more or less full as I keep it regularly or otherwise, and it often happens at busy seasons that I get behindhand. The plan on which I want to write now may, if persevered in, supply in some measure the place of a journal, which otherwise I fear you will not get. I shall take up my pen every day, whether I have anything to say or not. I have just looked back to see if my week's journal requires any explanation. My canoe, from its size, had the name of "The Family Coach," and is generally called "The Coach," or "The Big Canoe." It is a very useful one, can carry a considerable load, and John is now giving it a keel and some rigging, intending to make an expedition in it to Peterboro in

preference to a boat, the water being exceedingly low ; in consequence of which the weekly boat has given up going down. There scarcely ever was so little water, the falls are not at all like themselves. The woods on one side of us took fire from the ashes of Menzies' pipe, and all being very dry, and the wind very high, we were in some alarm lest Dr. Dhiel's trees should be killed, and spoil our view. On the other side the fires spread across the creek from the burning log heaps, and were still spreading and threatening our store firewood when I visited them. Yesterday's rain appears to have checked, but not extinguished them.

*Sunday, Oct. 7.*—John set out before breakfast, intending to go up to Balsam lake to call on Admiral Vansittart. It is more inclined to freeze than on any day we have had this year. I begin to think a little more about frost and snow than I have done this long time, and wonder how I shall like them on second trial. The transition from summer to winter will, I expect, be rather sudden. Last fall we had very sharp frosts before this time. This year we seem quite to have had a second summer since the flies left us, but it has been an uncommon one. John says he has seen ice in every month in the year, excepting July, and he is not quite sure about that month, but certainly as late as June 29, and again the very beginning of August. I have had a cold, the first since I came to this country, not a bad one ; but the spell is broken, and I am sorry for it.

*Monday, Oct. 8.*—John returned about mid-day from his expedition, he had not got further than Mr. Dennistoun's, this gentleman, who was to have accompanied him, being obliged to remain at home. The usual Monday boat unexpectedly goes down again this week, and John suddenly determined to go in it, so our

list of commissions was completed, a hasty dinner prepared for him, and after a bustling hour or two, he set off. I had been to the woods to see what the fire was doing; it had spread little, but the wind threatened to rekindle it. I was tempted to pursue my ramble a little, but I found a sort of melancholy creeping over me as the wind rustled above me, and scattered showers of leaves around me, so I hastened home to shake it off, and the commotion attending John's departure was well calculated to set me right. I am very little accustomed to solitary rambles, and romantic musings. I must tell you I had a letter the other day from the young lady we married at New York. She had promised to write to me as soon as I had given her information of our arrival here. I performed my part punctually, and, having no tidings, and being really interested about her, had written again during the winter, but without receiving the promised intelligence. I had at last given up all expectation of hearing. I was exceedingly glad to hear her describe herself as very happy; she had just become a mother, and ill health previous to this event was alleged as the cause of her silence. I cannot help thinking that her mind had been diseased as well as her body—there was something strange about her, and this had always been one of my surmises in endeavouring to account for her not writing, as she had appeared really very grateful for the part we acted towards her, and she still expresses herself warmly so. I had also doubts and fears as to the result of an alliance formed under such unusual circumstances; but the tone of her letter satisfies me on this head. As you may have felt interested about the *dramatis personæ* of our Atlantic journals, I will tell you that Miss Ormstead's match went off upon money matters, her father being indignant at the

mercenary stipulations of his intended son-in-law. If I write you so much about persons you can care so little for, you may have a long letter, but whether interesting or not is quite another thing.

*Tuesday, Oct. 9.*—Quite an uneventful day. My mother not being well, we sat rather more quietly at our work than usual, and talked of past days, and friends at home. We were just on the point of passing from the past to the future, when a boat we could not make out attracted our attention, and interrupted the conversation, which was perhaps well, for it generally sets me pondering, though I feel most strongly the wisdom of the command to take no thought for the morrow. My mother is trying to finish the slippers for William which were begun on board the *Independence*.

*Wednesday, Oct. 10.*—Again an uninteresting day, but rather a busy one. It is our wash, and though John is away, we are not a small family, the party in the kitchen being ten this day or two. Six or seven are at present our usual number. We certainly have been rather a bustling family this summer, and, when I look back, I sometimes wonder how we managed for those months we had no fire in the house, and every culinary operation, from baking bread to heating water, was performed on a dilapidated cooking stove, whilst eight or nine meals were regularly served each day and ten or twelve mouths fed with bread. This stove stands about ten yards from the back door, under a little shed. It measures about 2 feet 7 inches each way. The chimney pipe rises at the top, an oval kettle fits into one side, a deep pan with a steamer above it into the other side, and a large boiler on a bake-pan at the bottom, each hole having an iron lid, when the vessels are not in, on which you may then

place smaller saucepans, or heat irons, etc. The front of the stove has an upper and lower door and a little hearth—formerly there was something of an oven within, but it was out of repair before I was acquainted with it, now there is only an iron plate, which enables you to have your fire on the upper or lower storey. Here was many a nice dinner cooked with all proper varieties for a party of five or six (sometimes more), besides the eternal almost daily bread-baking, and everlasting frying for breakfasts and suppers. We have now had an oven built and a great relief it is, moreover setting the bake-pans at liberty, whose perpetual occupation was a great inconvenience. We have made many experiments in the bread-baking way. I think I told you we patronised hop rising, but some failures led us to try the common salt rising, and the votes were in favour of it. At one time we baked a great deal of leaven bread, but though frequently very successful, we also often had a sour loaf; now the president of the cooking department gives us hop rising bread, and I am inclined to hope we shall be more faithful to it than before. Our wash-house has lately become serviceable, and so by degrees we are getting forward, and in due time shall have things complete and comfortable, and wonder how so many conveniences could be dispensed with. Very little can be done this year in the way of smoothing, or levelling; what is some time to be lawn and garden is all still in the rough, and I daresay we must exercise our patience some time longer. To-morrow I must give you another dissertation, if its events afford as little to relate as these last days have done. We have latterly had more variety than usual, what with our own guests, the regatta, and its accompaniments.

*Thursday, Oct. 11.*—A cold raw day. After a few

household occupations, I was attacking in good earnest a job in the upholstering line, which had been hanging on hand for some time, when I was first agreeably interrupted by letters from England, and afterwards by one from John, saying he had to attend the Quarter Sessions, and could not tell when he should be at home. I was sufficiently disappointed just to ask myself the question how I should like a three or four months' absence. John's despatch was brought by a plasterer, obtained from Peterboro, and now we are really going to have the rooms underdrawn. Of course the house will be turned upside down for a time, and maybe my letter, along with other things, may be laid aside; but when I resume it I shall have to tell you that we have got a very good job done. Perhaps, after all, the confusion will not be so very engrossing as I fancy it. In a few minutes one room was cleared out and the work is begun; but the clearing and cleaning after the work-people, is worse than the preparation for them. We had plasterers in the house three or four weeks ago when our chimneys were examined, and received some alterations, from which I think they are decidedly improved, though not entirely cured; they will be more tried in a month or two, when, smoke or no smoke, we must make large fires. I think I have twice put the question whether your chimneys were performing better than they used to do, and from your never remembering to answer it, I draw a very favourable inference. I think though our ceilings may be done, the season is so far advanced we shall put off hanging and carpeting (with the new carpet) until spring. You cannot imagine how perfectly *comme il faut* rough, log walls appear to us now; when we have got our striped green print up we shall feel as grand as Queen Victoria amidst the damask hangings at



Buckingham Palace. Hitherto I fancy we have more English elegancies about us than most of our neighbours, but the Dunsfords, I expect, will quite eclipse us, for they, it is said, are bringing a carriage out with them. I hope they do not forget to bring a road too. When the internal bustle gets over, I expect we shall have a little more leisure than we have hitherto, from one circumstance or another, enjoyed. Our housemaid is a pretty good needlewoman, and seems fond of her work, and glad to have a little time for it. Whether our old woman may do or not I cannot tell; she is certainly too old, and is not as active and efficient a servant as one could wish, but with so many men about it is some comfort to have one of steady years, and as there are not numbers to pick and choose from, it is very doubtful whether we could obtain one of exactly right years, powers, and capabilities. She has her husband, too, to help her out, and as he is old also, one does not mind seeing him occupied sometimes in trifles about the house. It used to grieve me to see so fine a youth as our favourite William not fully, or to himself beneficially, occupied. Our English letter to-day was William's of the 7th September, per *Great Western*; as it will soon be replied to by post I shall take no notice of it here. I had one also from Rosalie.<sup>1</sup> Tell William that her brother Jules was going to England, and expected to be in Manchester. I wonder whether he will see William. Charles Morel has lost his Sicilian wife, and has sent his only child, a little girl of six or seven, to be brought up under the care of her Aunt Rosalie. Madme. de Rougemont, *née* de Mimont, has a large family, and none of the Miss Bourgeois grow old. This is all the Swiss news.

*Friday, Oct. 12.*—We dismantled our lower story

<sup>1</sup> Rosalie Morel, an Yverdon friend of old days.

completely this morning, and got pretty comfortably established above-stairs before an early dinner, so that I was able to give the afternoon to my upholstery. It has been a very wintry day, snowing a great part of it, and extremely cold ; a week ago it was almost summer. I had an errand down to John's house, and was reminded of my many journeys to and fro last autumn in all sorts of weather. I assure you I appreciated the advantages of a house and home, even though invaded with work-people. I think it is very well we get this job done while John is away. I am now not at all anxious for his return.

*Saturday, Oct. 13.*—We had a sharp frost last night, the thermometer was still some degrees below the freezing point when I looked at it this morning, and there was thick ice ; nevertheless we have felt less cold than yesterday. It is my comfort when sadly starved to think that this coming season of the year has always appeared to me the worst ; when once there is no possibility of being too warm, then there is a chance of being warm enough. I was busy with my bed-hangings again this morning, and since dinner have been doing another sketch for you. I think in time you will have some sort of a notion what this world of ours is like. We had once planned this autumn to go down to Bobcaygeon, stay a night there, and get some sketches of the town and of the lake, but it is now quite clear we must wait for another season, for which I consider the regatta to blame. How all the bustle of that week seems to have faded from one's mind ! I could fancy it was at least six months since the flags were fluttering, the sails swelling, the oars splashing, and the water sparkling, about Sturgeon point, and that woody promontory itself covered with beauty and fashion, as the phrase is. We had been before more than nine months without seeing a single lady, excepting that once, through the telescope,

I spied Mrs. Hamilton in a boat. I am sometimes reminded of my early years and companionship with boys only ; perhaps you would think my feminine manners in danger if you were to see me steering a boat for my gentlemen rowers, or may be handling the ropes a little in sailing, but don't be alarmed though such things do occur occasionally, they are rather infrequent, and my woman's avocations will always, I think, more than counterbalance them. I said I was often reminded of my early years. I have caught myself wishing an old, long-forgotten wish that I had been born of the rougher sex. Women are very dependent here, and give a great deal of trouble ; we feel our weakness more than anywhere else. This, I cannot but think, has a slight tendency to sink us, it may be, into a more natural and proper sphere than the one we occupy in over civilised life, as the thing I mean and feel, though I do not express it well, operates, I believe, as a safeguard to our feminine virtues, such virtues, I mean, as the Apostles recommended to us, for I think here a woman must be respectable to meet with consideration and respect. The greatest danger, I think, we all run from our peculiar mode of life is that of becoming selfish and narrow-minded. We live so much to ourselves and mix so exclusively with one community. It is not only that the individuals are few, but the degrees and classes we come in contact with are still more limited. Those who have come to this country before their thinking and feeling years, ought, I think, all to go back to the old world for a time, just to look above and below them ; and how many new emotions they would have to experience ! Here we know that the world is wide, but we do not feel its wideness. A long meditation sometimes on the former chapters of my life, brings me down to something more like my real proportions, but self and self's concerns

expand very rapidly when the pressure of the past is removed. We certainly do not gain many new ideas, and must consequently fall a little behind our age. My knowledge even of the country I live in, increases very slowly since my dear father's intelligent and comprehensive questionings have ceased to elicit information. My mother has just finished her portion of a letter to you, and I will lay aside this sheet to finish hers. You will find this contain much old matter, as letters of a subsequent date are likely to precede it. My mother, I fear, will have raised your expectations of this my dull folio—such it was in the first edition.

*Monday, Oct. 15.*—John arrived at home as we were sitting at tea last night, so I did not take out my journal, for we sat talking the whole evening, narrating the events of the week, and hearing the particulars of his journey. We had a mild, hazy day—very pleasant after the frost. Our Sunday congregation assembled in the kitchen, which was so hot that we were obliged to set open the back door, notwithstanding the occasional intrusion of dogs, cats, and poultry. We had a bride and bridegroom at church,—Jordan's eldest daughter, who was married a week or two ago. The young man has land near her father, so we have another settled family in the neighbourhood. One of our new pair of blankets went as a wedding present to the young couple, for we feel ourselves now so well stocked as to be able to spare them. We shall never get into the way, I think, of heaping as many blankets upon us as people do here. One warm night in June Mr. Dennistoun, finding himself a little too hot, began to take off some of his coverings, and found he had been sleeping under eight blankets. In the afternoon my mother and I took a walk, first to Menzies' to see the baby, which had not been well, and afterwards to the landing, by way of a

saunter. When we got home Aunt Alice had rambled out; her route had been the round of the clearing, climbing a fence occasionally on her way. We do not often separate in this manner, but generally if we do go out for the sake of a walk, sally forth the three in a body. But there is an advantage in dividing our numbers, for when we meet again we have our little adventures to relate. She had to tell how "Rock" behaved, and we how "Juno" conducted herself, and so forth. Our canine establishment has been further reduced since the deaths of "Jezebel" and "Fury" by "Mowbray" being given away, to the great satisfaction of the household, for he was a terrible thief. Mr. Savage's dog, however, is in our keeping, and such a favourite with John, that I do not think he will be disposed to relinquish it to its master again, and indeed, "Nettle" was much fonder of being here than at home before Mr. Savage's departure—so much for this important division of the establishment.

This morning was beautiful; it was just freezing but no more, and there was a beautiful fog over the lake. These lake fogs are at times exceedingly picturesque, rolling up or down it with the wind, and the *Alice* always looks her loveliest when she has such a background. The morning was devoted to clearing out the cellars, and stowing away their various contents, wherever there was room, and now the hammering is removed below-stairs. In the afternoon I took a solitary ramble to the wood, and skirted it for some time, in search of a point from which the house might look well in a sketch. I cannot quite please myself, but I think I shall try another representation of it some day. I left the beaten track altogether, and shall pay the penalty to-night by a long darn. It is just a week since I visited the woods before, and a great change it has made. They are getting very thin, and the ground

is well carpeted with red and yellow leaves. When I got home I found there had been an alarm. The carpenter had been burning too many chips, and the chimney had caught fire, but all was quite safe again. John had to go again to the Falls to-day about lumber for our proceedings, and has not made his appearance to dinner, though we waited till six o'clock, probably deterred from setting out by a very stormy appearance on the lake, which is now, however, again like a looking-glass. When John returned from his trip to the "Front" last night, we very soon got upon the subject of matrimony, a very favourite topic with him at present; but though much in his head, I do not think it has reached his heart yet. I wish he may meet with a wife for his own sake most sincerely, though I think it very questionable whether it would not be for my happiness that he should continue to want his sister.

There is so much happiness, under every disadvantage, in having an object in life, and feeling yourself of real use to some one, that I think even selfishness would induce me to remain with him, whilst unmarried, unless, indeed, I should happen to marry myself, which thing was never less likely. I will here thank you for the kind wish expressed that, in the event of my returning to England, I should make your house my home. I am perfectly convinced of your endeavour to make it a happy one to me should I do so, and I think I may trust to your kindness still further, and believe that you would not attribute it to any want of grateful and sisterly affection, if I should not do so. But the morrow must take thought for the things of itself. One of the novelties John saw on his late trip was a lady knitting a pair of stockings in one, that is, doing double knitting from top to toe, and after taking off the latter, having

the one stocking completed within the other. This will be more interesting to Cicely than to you. The lady thought it saved time, I cannot understand how it should do so. I do not, however, comprehend the performance exactly; perhaps I may be able to obtain some further information through John. I am now knitting him a pair of mits for driving in, having a forefinger as well as thumb distinct, with space, however, for it to join its three companions, when not requiring its own separate home. John heard, too, at Peterboro, that Mr. Athill was ordained, but how the news came he does not know. Reports true or false travel through the woods very fast sometimes. We were reported to have reached Port Hope on our way here a week before we had left Toronto. We shall know of the truth or otherwise of this report, of course, before long. Query—will he be going to England now?

*Tuesday, Oct. 16.*—I put the finishing stroke really to my bed-hangings this morning, and no sooner had done so, than we determined to attack the dining-room curtains, for the plasterer has completed it, and we are in hopes of getting the room finished off before Saturday, when John entertains the gentlemen of the Verulam and Fenelon Hunt. He is to have his dinner at his own house, and adjourn here to tea. This is the third time that such a party has been planned, and bad weather, or something or other, has prevented it from taking place. I hope this will go on, and also go off, well. John got back from the Falls this morning; he had not been able to get his load before dark last night. I had been flattering myself that we were pretty comfortably settled with servants, and therefore am much disappointed to find we have another change in prospect. Our housemaid informs us that she never stays from home in the winter, and that she never intended

remaining more than three months. Of this we were never informed, or we certainly should not have engaged her. This, I suppose, is one of the troubles of the backwoods; there is so much expense and loss of time in hunting for a servant here, that it is doubly annoying. However, it is not such a calamity to be left without as it would be at home. Last winter we spared our only woman twice, once for a week and again for a fortnight, on the latter occasion having company in the house. Mr. Savage was staying the sugar-making with us, indeed he has come into the kitchen and helped me to set a pan upon the fire. How strangely one's ideas accommodate themselves to the ways and necessities of the country one is in! This summer, when our bustling household made a little help from the ladies often necessary, I used to be amused at myself going so composedly about my duties at the cooking stove, in full sight of Mr. Atthill, occupied in the joiner's shop. One would feel shocked at such observation in England.

*Wednesday, Oct. 17.*—This morning my mother and I cut up a little porkling we had had killed yesterday, and we agreed, when on a small scale, it was more agreeable to operate ourselves than stand by and give directions. Afterwards we were all buried in red moreen. I rather like a piece of work of this kind to be done in a hurry, with a given day on which it must be completed; one sets about it with energy, and it gets finished. It has been very cold to-day. Our drawing-room is quite too low, we find, to admit of the busts standing upon the bookcases. We must have brackets in either the hall or dining-room for them. It will be very essential that we place them in a good light; I find it makes the greatest difference. William's bust, removed now out of the dirt and confusion below,



is placed, for the time being, where I can scarcely see in it a likeness, excepting perhaps the nose. I am afraid I shall never like it so well anywhere as in its first position on the stove, where, of course, it cannot remain. I must not indulge in more scribbling to-night.

*Thursday, Oct. 18.*—I have just been writing part of a sheet to William, and shall probably in consequence cut my journal very short to-day. Our confusion increases, and will increase still more, though we shall have a habitable room below-stairs after this week; yet lath and plaster will be about all the next one, and I fear more than that. We have finished the dining-room curtains to-day; I should be sorry to do such stiff sewing in the depth of winter, from what I recollect of my finger ends last year in hard frost. My hands are not given to chap much, but just the end of my thumb and forefinger used sometimes to crack, and get deeper and deeper for two or three weeks. It is surprising how much annoyance so small a thing can give. I am afraid I shall be softer about cold this year than I was last one. Then anything short of freezing to death was an agreeable surprise; of course you understand the expression in a modified sense. John says he minds this winter much more than he used to do; after all it is the length of it, rather than its severity, which is so very appalling.

*Friday, Oct. 19.*—I have no variety for you to-day, nothing but confusion throughout; the smoke, too, conspired against us, and turned us out of our principal upstairs sitting-room. We are now all congregated together in Aunt Alice's room. It is not often that the wind comes from this quarter. I only saw our room once or twice during last winter in the state it was this morning. It has been a more thoroughly rainy day than we have seen for some time, and

promises ill for John's party to-morrow. We got the dining-room put in order again to-day. Whilst the workmen were at dinner my mother possessed herself of the plasterer's trowel, and proved that she understood the trade by performing a neat repair about the dining-room fireplace. A hearth here can never look as neat as at home; there is not half the satisfaction in sweeping up that there is where there is a grate to sweep under; but if I should sometime again have the pleasure of putting the poker into a good coal fire, scaling the bottom bar and brushing up, I have no doubt I should find myself longing for a glowing pile of Canadian maple. I have a remembrance, too, of a black-looking fire and a housemaid's long face saying it would not kindle for the chips were done, an unheard-of calamity in this country; they accumulate only too fast, when the chopping goes forward. I have never visited the fires in the woods lately, for though I believe they are not even yet extinguished, the weather has been such that they certainly cannot have spread. The woods are changing very rapidly; I expect a few more days will clear them of all their leaves. I am afraid my journal becomes very stupid; it is rather unfortunate that you should come in for all the plastering, it is somewhat stupifying. I expect, however, we shall have much comfort from our present derangement when it is all over; our rooms will be warmer, although the sun will not shine so brightly through the walls as it used to do, and we shall not need to go round stuffing with cotton wool, and pasting brown paper over the holes as we did last winter. Moreover, every word spoken above-stairs will not be heard below-stairs, and *vice versa*, neither will it be necessary, when washing an upper room, to cover all the furniture in the room below it, etc., etc. Though our floors ap-

peared very well laid in the first place, yet the shrinking of the wood made many a wide gap in them. There is no such thing as getting seasoned wood for building, and scarcely such a thing as making full allowance for shrinking in cases where you may attempt to make it, so that for a length of time many a little alteration or re-adjustment is becoming necessary.

*Sunday, Oct. 21.*—Yesterday was again a wet day, but not so wet as Friday, for I made a great many journeys down to John's and only came in for one shower; yet the weather was so unfavourable that John felt quite certain none of his party would come. Our preparations, however, of course went on, and as we had a nice dinner ready for them, I was well pleased, just before dark, to see a boat making its way to the landing. The guests were five out of the eight who were to have assembled, the defaulters being the gentlemen from the lower end of the lake, on account of weather, and Mr. Wallis, through indisposition. Those present were Mr. M'Laren (Mr. W.'s right hand), Captain Dobbs, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Dennistoun, and Mr. Dundas. Perhaps you would like to know what we gave them for dinner. Soup, boiled pork (the national dish), stewed goose, and chicken pie, with vegetables. Second course—plum-pudding, apple-tart, and a trifle. These all had to be carried down a slippery hill on a dark night, but everything, I understand, arrived safe, and full justice was done to our cookery. Between nine and ten our receiving-room began to fill with blanket coats, and I assure you when such is the costume, a room fills much faster than at any other time. We had tea and a very chatty evening, all being in good spirits, except poor Captain Dobbs, who is just about to leave the neighbourhood for the winter. The old man is sadly quizzed by the younger ones.

He doubtless lays himself open to it, but I wish they would have a little more mercy. Mr. Dennistoun and John were in deep conversation all evening, whether planning their next year's trip to England or not I do not know, and we ladies entertained, or were entertained by, the other gentlemen. Our room looked exceedingly snug and English, with its Turkey carpet, its crimson curtains, and its ceiling, even notwithstanding its log walls. Mr. Atthill, I understand, is really ordained, and will be in these parts again before long. I shall like to see him in his new character. He is, I believe, a very sincere Christian, and will, I hope, make a useful minister to some pastorless flock in our poor neglected country. I believe the flirtation between Mr. Dennistoun and Miss Hamilton has been actively renewed this year; if we should have a wedding on the lakes I shall begin to have some hopes for our other young men. The Dunsford family has arrived, not on the lake, but somewhere in this country, on their road towards it. Five young ladies all grown up! What a commotion they may make amongst us! This morning the same party assembled to tea, coffee, and water porridge,—a great favourite with most of our backwoodsmen. They departed before our congregation met. We had an excellent sermon on evil-speaking, and by way of showing how much we had profited by it, we began talking over the weak points of our several neighbours immediately afterwards. Aunt Alice is looking very melancholy to-night, her watch refuses to go, the clock stopped yesterday, my watch is gone to England, my mother's to Peterboro, there is a general strike among the time-showers. Fortunately my mother has a second old watch, on which we all now depend. I meditate intercepting William's until my own returns.

*Monday, Oct. 22.*—A slight frost again, and rather a pleasant day. After various household occupations and a little putting of things straight after John's party, I set out to take a walk, a thing I have done much more frequently than I used to do. My daily duties have not given me so much exercise within doors as they did. To-day I crossed Dr. Dhiel's land down to the lake shore, and finding, from the lowness of the water, a very good beach, I skirted the lake for a considerable distance. I have not had such a stretch of fast walking since I came to this country. I turned back at last very reluctantly, but I thought a longer absence would excite surprise. If I could start again from the point I stopped at, I would get to Sturgeon point to-morrow, but as I must go over the same ground I shall probably not proceed much further. Probably the novelty of the thing made part of my enjoyment to-day. I gathered a few shells; if my little nieces inherit their mother's taste and have learnt to think of Sturgeon lake, an offering of shells from its shores will not be unacceptable. There is very little variety except in colour and size. John is gone to the Falls this evening to see the invalid. The cellars have been plastered to-day, and to-morrow we shall have to introduce the workmen upstairs, for every room in the house, it appears, requires something doing to it, either in the way of finish or repair. In the hurry of examining the roof when the chimney was on fire, part of the ceiling of my room was broken in. I call it my room, but I do not occupy it myself, excepting with my sundry possessions. My mother has taken a great fancy to her own fireside since she has lived upstairs.

*Tuesday, Oct. 23.*—A beautiful bright morning. I thought, the first thing, that I would certainly double

another cape to-day, but it soon became gloomy and cold, so I made a patching and darning day instead, the details of which would not figure particularly well in the pages of a journal, nor am I aware that my musings and cogitations were of a very interesting nature; most probably they partook a little of the homeliness of my occupation.

John came home from the Falls to dinner; he brought no news, however, from that centre of our universe.

*Thursday, Oct. 25.*—I did not take out my writing yesterday, it was a stupid day. Every room upstairs is now smelling of plaster, and looking as if a week's work would scarcely set it to rights. The confusion, however, has nearly reached its climax. To-day was almost worse than yesterday; but to-morrow our plasterer departs, and though there will be plenty of cleaning to follow, I expect Sunday will see us very much like ourselves again. We had several newspapers and a letter last night, of September 15th. I do not reply to them, as half a dozen letters may perhaps go by post before this gets off; but I cannot help just alluding to the unaccountable mistake which has taken some of my drawings to Ford Bank. I have been trying to recall what I can have said which led you to suppose I intended any of them for our friends there. My mother says, "You see what it is to write indistinctly." I am glad, however, my bad writing has produced anything like pleasure; it might have been the reverse. This morning I took a walk through the bush, for the purpose of calling in Mrs. Daniel's assistance for a grand scrubbing day to-morrow. She promises to come, though she seems a little overwhelmed with business herself, as they had killed an ox a day or two before, and she had had to assist her

husband in flaying, cutting up, etc., and when the butcher's part is over, I know well from our own experience how much labour there is in turning head, heels, tallow, etc., all to the best account. The shanty showed evidence of the work that had been going forward. In coming back I visited a new house that Jordan has been building, the only edifice of squared logs besides our own that there is about. I then called in to see Mrs. Jordan, and compliment her on her new mansion. Nearer to ourselves I found another house, sprung up since I had been on the road, of which I had never heard a word. It is Allan's. He and his three step-sons, of whom our William is one, were busy working at it, and this family will be one of our near neighbours in about a week. If they chop with judgment this winter I think the new building will afford me a pretty sketch in spring. I made one more call on my way home on Mrs. Ferguson Duke, and then I thought I had transacted a great deal of business, just as you might have done after spending a morning with your card-case in hand. Oh! there are exemptions and privileges in the backwoods! The last expedition I made so far was on a beautiful July evening, when Mrs. Daniel's baby had been taken very ill in convulsions, and I set out with my mother's instructions and prescriptions, attended by one of our maidens, just at sunset. Our homeward path was illuminated by a beautiful moon, fireflies, and phosphoric wood. This was the first and also the last time I have seen the eternal Forest under Luna's dominion. The little sufferer of that day is now a fine healthy child. We have had rain again, and the lake rises so fast that I am afraid my newly discovered promenade will be soon under water. It has certainly been very fortunate for our plasterer's operations that the frost

has kept off so long. He is now going to plaster Mr. Wallis' house and the church. I am truly sorry for Mr. Wallis, having all to come that we have just gone through. I have been making experiments to-day in my room, to see whether there be no possibility of warming it this winter, and I am happy to say after dismissing one stove, and putting up another, I see a good prospect of this addition to our comfort. However, I feel half blinded to-night from the smoke I have been in most of the afternoon.

*Sunday, Oct. 28.*—I think you will not be surprised that the business of Friday and Saturday afforded me nothing interesting to relate. Peace and quietness is at last restored, and order also everywhere but in the drawing-room, which we may not perhaps refit in a hurry, especially if we determine to hang it at once. I think it very probable we shall live a good deal in one room this winter for the sake of warmth, and the Turkey carpet will be very likely to make the choice fall upon the dining-room; there are double windows, however, to throw into the other side. We have been sadly thrown back in our proceedings by the loss of the putty, which John had provided at Peterboro, and sent up by the boat, whilst he went down to the front. The glass arrived safe, but the putty was lost on the way, and there is none, nor materials for making it, in these parts at present, so that our new building must continue to admit the winter cold in every room. Perhaps some one similarly situated possessed themselves of it. There is sad scrambling for some of the necessaries of life sometimes. There was only one box of soap to be had in Peterboro, which John and Mr. Dennistoun obtained, and were to have divided, but, coming up unattended, it was intercepted, and parcelled out at Bobcaygeon. Luckily John had been



able to procure another at Coburg, but neither that place nor Peterboro could furnish any candles; lamp oil is also not to be obtained at present. I hope there will be an arrival of some of these necessaries before the frost, though our English supplies make us in some measure independent. We are talking of making soap; hitherto we have not done so, having only one servant and few conveniences. Last winter we thought it better not to attempt it, and our large family gave us quite sufficient to do this summer. Now, I think, we may venture on a new undertaking. We have had several snowstorms to-day, with bright gleams of sunshine between. John took advantage of some of the fine intervals to go up to the Falls. I hope to hear when he comes back that some arrangement has been made for sending the scow to Ops, and bringing up the remainder of our packages. John intends writing to Whitby to desire that any coming after this may be sent back to Coburg, from where it will be more easy to get them up in winter; numbers 9 and 10 are not yet announced. I should tell you that both the clock and Aunt Alice's watch have taken to going again, and to counterbalance this good news, I must say I have no hope that my room can retain its warming apparatus.

*Monday, Oct. 29.*—The ground white for the first time, and the thermometer at 22, a strong wind too, so that it was very cold; but there was something exhilarating in the brightness that made the aspect of winter less formidable. We sent our maiden under escort to the Falls, that she might see the lion of the lakes before leaving them. John came home from the Falls, bringing intelligence of Mrs. Jamieson's death, and Mr Jamieson's intended return; but his intentions are often, I understand, long in executing, and I don't think anybody seems to care how much

time he takes on this occasion. I went out in the afternoon for a walk, but as I could not attempt a distant one, instead of pursuing my discoveries of last week, I turned to the right, and visited a new pier John is building, and then proceeded along the shore to the point represented in two or three of my sketches, but not being able to get round it I turned into the wood and proceeded a little way through a cedar swamp, when I came out on the lake again. I found it snowing, so I made the best of my way home, carrying with me one new shell as the profits of my expedition, and having fixed upon the point of a next year's sketch. My mother and aunt I left very busy melting lead to solder a broken candlestick, and evidently enjoying an occupation, associated with many youthful reminiscences.

*Tuesday, Oct. 30.*—A fine frosty morning led me to set out early in the day for another walk on the margin of the lake, bent upon exploring the coast a little further, whilst the state of the waters admit of it. I found no difficulty in reaching Cedar point, the extent of my limited ambition, since I made the sage discovery that I could not divide the walk into two, indeed, I passed it some way, and came so near to Sturgeon point that, had I had the least ambition to say I had reached it, I could certainly have proceeded, but my ambition was rather to say I had stopped short of it, for I knew that the exploit would give me anything but applause from any quarter. On my way I stumbled upon a deserted Indian encampment, where the business of canoe-making had been going on with great activity. A little further on I was rather surprised to meet a man, but I have no doubt the man was much more surprised to meet a woman. When I got home I found my two hours' absence had alarmed

my mother ; she had sent John in search of me, supposing I had either stuck fast in a swamp, or got fairly bewildered in the woods. I have not the character of being half as prudent as I really am. I am aware of the liability there is of getting entangled in the forest if you venture far, and am very cautious. I think I must have taken some of these walks in order to have my adventures to relate, for I do not suppose during the preceding year I have made so many expeditions as this month. There is only one more day left of it, and I think I must then bring my journal to a close for the present. I have enjoyed writing it very much, and I shall have great pleasure in sending you another month some other time.

*The last of the month, Oct. 31,* is indeed most different from the first, the thermometer down at eleven with a sharp wind. We were, however, too busy to think about cold. Both an ox and a pig died the day before. I need say no more—give the reins to your imagination to fill up the details of our morning. Before dinner the Rev. Richard Atthill made his appearance amongst us, and confirmed my suspicions that this journal could not go by him, for six months hence its little interest would be greatly diminished. Mr. Atthill has been ordained to the living of Newmarket for that time, after which he will probably go home before entering on another cure. He left us again this morning, November 1, after christening Menzies' youngest child. We are sorry that the person in this country we know at all well should be leaving the neighbourhood ; however, it was just because he was leaving it that we came to see so much of him. He brings word that the Dunsfords are in Peterboro ; he had seen them there, but we did not get any very distinct account from him what our new

neighbours are like ; perhaps he would not prejudice us for or against. They are to occupy Mr. Atthill's house this winter, and our carpenter is gone down to make some preparations for them. The tidings from the Front are that a very unquiet winter is expected, and a war is again fully anticipated. We are, I think, so far back that we need fear no personal disturbance. John thinks we are quite too far back for that, and that we shall scarcely know what is going forward. I now take leave of my readers for the present ; if they have derived an evening's amusement from the foregoing pages, and have been furnished with a little matter for thought and conversation, I am more than repaid, and shall have great pleasure in appearing before them again at a future time.

1839

EXTRACT from a LETTER from ANNE LANGTON,  
dated January 1, 1839.

I MUST now report our own proceedings since our last epistle. John and Mr. Wallis returned in due time from Toronto, having the promise that the business they went upon should be attended to by Government. John seemed very glad to be at home again after his several rambles, and we were not less so to see him arrive. We had never been so long left to ourselves before. He reported Toronto to be as quiet as if there were no war in the country—no bustle and excitement, as at this time last year. How one becomes habituated to everything, even to war and tumult. The number of military, however, had exhausted the city; nothing was to be had. There were no candles in the capital of the province. John, however, procured some window latches, so that string and nails are dismissed from some of our windows. Our drawing-room was just completed before Christmas Day, and I assure you no little admiration has been bestowed upon it. I do not mean by guests, though no doubt they did admire; but it was from our self-satisfied selves that the exclamation "what a pretty room!" has burst forth, and a pretty room it most certainly is. The carpet looks uncommonly well, and it happens that the

new hearth-rug we brought out suits it as if it had been made to correspond. We have had book-shelves put up on each side of the window, which come down to the ground, and without taking much from the size of the room, they give us a very snug appearance. John's books as well as our own now adorn the room. The other bookcases we had a little lowered to admit of the busts being placed upon them. The *tout ensemble* gives great satisfaction. The Christmas party was not very numerous. Mr. Fraser had just got his "company," and Mr. Need, his lieutenant, was also detained by his military duties. The latter was here one day in the preceding week, not a little repenting his forwardness to volunteer his services. However, he is an idle man at present, and it is only proper that he should go and represent the lakes among the defenders of the country. Half a dozen gentlemen only were added to our own party on Christmas Day, and the usual round and repetition of dinners during the week did not take place, though the friends concluded the last year yesterday with Mr. Dennistoun, and commence the one to-day with Mr. Wallis. Before this time next year one of the bachelor friends will have become a Benedict. Mr. Dennistoun's engagement to Miss Hamilton is declared to his friends. Miss Hamilton is at present at Peterboro. We asked Mrs. Hamilton to join the meeting on Christmas Day, but she declined, and indeed summer is, I think, a better time for ladies to visit each other in this country. I am, however, contemplating a drive down to the Dunsfords to pay my respects to the new-comers, and looking forward to the excursion with much pleasure. I have yet never been by land further than to the Daniels, about two miles off, and I shall like a little more extensive acquaintance with the Bush roads. If we accomplish

this, as we intend, I shall record my opinion of a sleigh drive in my journal. I had so much pleasure in writing you one before that I intend now giving you a winter month, as I did an autumn one, and hope in the spring and summer to do the same. The two last months, November and December, were somewhat monotonous ones, on the whole, affording no variety excepting in the domestic department, where variety is least of all agreeable. Our housemaid's place, vacated early in November, was, after a time, filled up by a little girl of fourteen, strong and stout, and very capable of being made a good servant, but she and our two old people did not draw well together. Of course both parties were in fault, and we were the sufferers from the inharmonious kitchen. The crisis, however, came, and the old people left us. I was sorry in some respects, for though not altogether suiting us, we might have gone on quietly during the winter months. However, the old woman was evidently tired of service, and, I daresay, now is rejoicing in the tranquillity of her own shanty, and perhaps also in the absence of her husband, who has enlisted, and was certainly something of a tyrant. Since that our little maiden has had the assistance of one of Jordan's daughters for two or three weeks, but we are contriving now to do without any. Our old servant William resumed his duties of last year for a time, and his elder brother George is performing them now, and is a very quiet, civil lad, though with less spirit and activity than his brother. Firing is a most troublesome part of housekeeping in this country, the drawing in and cutting up of wood is endless. It is astonishing to see the piles that disappear in a day, but it must be so in such a climate as ours. Of course, this being our second winter, we are not expected to bear the cold quite as well as new-

comers, but there are several reasons for our thinking more about it than last year. In the first place, the weather has been more severe, high winds have more generally prevailed with our sharpest frosts, and some of our rooms too, owing to the shrinking and warping of wood, admit much more of the external air. My mother's room we had not the least difficulty in keeping perfectly warm last winter. The water very seldom froze in it, and never in the recess beside the fire. Now, within two or three inches of the chimney, which feels quite warm to the touch, our water becomes ice, and notwithstanding an excellent fire night and day, the thermometer will remain sometimes ten, twelve or fifteen degrees below the freezing point. But this is on our colder days, and even then we have rarely been otherwise than warm in bed, though in covering we have never exceeded two blankets and the down quilt. I often admire the providential arrangement by which our blood continues to circulate when everything freezes about us. I selected our very sharpest frosts in which to make a midnight expedition down to John's house. The fact was we might easily have been too warm that night, for, owing, I believe, to a cinder having adhered to the hearth-brush, the floor in Aunt Alice's room had taken fire, and though when I discovered it, shortly after John had left us, a few jugs of water were sufficient to extinguish it, yet we felt his presence desirable, both to reassure us respecting the danger of its having communicated to the lathing of the ceiling below, and, as owner of the premises, to look after the safety of his own property. The horn, our usual way of summoning him, failed to call his attention, so I sallied forth, and astonished him by my appearance. As I toiled up the hill again, mostly up to my knees in snow for it had been blowing and drifting all day, I



experienced what it is to lose your breath at ten or twelve below zero, and thought of my respirator. We were able to go to bed quite easy that night, and in thankfulness for our preservation. A little longer undiscovered, and the fire might have been beyond our control.

JOURNAL, January 1839.

*Tuesday, January 1.*—I am presuming that my October journal was interesting to you before I receive any assurance to that effect, and purpose giving you a January one, not, however, I must confess, solely with a view to the pleasure of my brother and sister, but also of my own, for I had great enjoyment in a little daily converse with you. I find there are many little things one can mention the very day they occur without fearing that they will appear trifling, which after the lapse of a week one would not think of recording, and just these trifles bring us more before you than more important, but more occasional events. For this reason I should like you to send me the same sort of journal occasionally; a great deal may be put on one sheet of paper, when the eyes that have to read it are not very bad. The first thing I saw on coming down-stairs this morning was Sally Jordan milking the cows,—where do you think? Exactly at the step of the front door; this is to enlighten you as to Canadian ideas of tidiness. I have seen all the sweepings from the up-stairs' rooms ornamenting the snow before the front door. This was what I saw: my first occupation in the new year was assisting in getting three large plum-puddings into the pot, for we entertain company in the kitchen on New Year's Day. Our party, however, was very small, being only

one family, the Menzies who had been invited, preferring to have some of their own friends at home, and graciously promising to come some Sunday instead. Some of our puddings, therefore, were not for home consumption, but went, boiling in the pan, down the hill to grace the other entertainments. I hope they were liked, I am sure that the one at home was, for never did pudding or cake receive handsomer compliment than what was paid to those provided for this day. I wish everybody may sleep as well to-night as we have a right to hope, who, to give liberty in the kitchen, omitted dinner altogether!

*Wednesday, January 2.*—The day has been so mild that I am in terrible apprehension of the January thaw commencing and interfering with our drive down to the Dunsfords, and if it does not take place this week, it will certainly not take place this month, and perhaps not this winter, for the accomplishment of it requires a combination of propitious circumstances. It is entirely the drive and not the call that I anticipate with pleasure. John, returned from the New Year's celebration this morning, brought no news and no letter from England. There never was such a dull Christmas known in the country, for there is no whiskey either at tavern or store, and the people are all sober perforce! By the bye, they sell at the store about 4000 gallons of whiskey annually, besides which most of the gentlemen get up their own separately for the supply of themselves and work-people. I had Menzies' two little girls for a lesson to-day. I have lately begun to teach them a little. They come for about an hour three times a week; as yet we are not at all perfect in our letters, and I sometimes feel that, unaccustomed as I am to teaching, I shall not accomplish much in my short schooling. But one good effect it appears to have,

that they get a little more teaching at home. I hope this may continue, and then my own efforts will certainly not have been thrown away. My pupils are two very pretty little girls of about five and seven, and sometimes recall to my mind the dear little girls at Seedley. My mother was ironing and I cooking a good part of the morning, and maybe such avocations will mingle a good deal with our employments at present, as our little servant Kitty is quite by herself. She makes great exertions, however, when everything depends upon her, especially if cheered by a little applause.

*Thursday, January 3.*—We have accomplished our drive down to the Dunsfords, and this is a weight off all our minds. It was on John's as a thing that had to be done amongst other claims on himself and horses; on mine, as a thing that I was much afraid might, after all, not be; on my mother's as what perhaps might not be done without damage to her precious daughter, in the way of cold taking, or being shaken to pieces, and the relief to Aunt Alice was that we took back to his house her old plague "Mowbray," who had been an unwelcome visitor here for some time, preferring her unwilling hospitality (she is dog-feeder) to his usual fare with his present master. The thermometer was high, and the snow quite too soft for very good sleighing, but as it will very probably be worse, we thought it best to set out. I felt a little like a child with a treat in prospect, and thought it was well worth staying at home for a long time to have a feeling so juvenile. John had often wished to drive a stranger on that road; he said I was not quite "green" enough, for though the thing was new to me, I had too good a notion of the general rudeness of the country to be duly surprised. At any rate, I am now enlightened, for he gave me an abstract

of a sleigh drive, including in our eighteen miles more adventures than he had ever had in one journey before.

Iron and leather, etc., gave way many times in the jerks they got, but the sleigh driver on a bush road is accustomed to patching and piecing his harness. I have heard that it is a positive pleasure to be thrown into the deep snow, and John also gratified me with an upset. I must say, the fall was soft and easy, but I was so enveloped in my long fur cloak, that I scarcely knew how to get up again. By the bye, it was ten thousand pities that the thermometer was not below zero, and that so much good wrapping should, in a measure be thrown away. There is a good deal of snow on the ground now, and though soft and heavy for the horses, the sleighing to-day was by no means bad. I rather dread the coming thaw, for how the mountains of snow are to disappear without inundating us I can scarcely conceive. The snow upon the trees of the forest is often very curious, but the very high wind we have had since any fall, must have made their drapery more scanty than usual. The slightest spray is a sufficient framework for the snow to rest upon, and you often see masses and festoons suspended without any apparent support. I intend to have a drive to the Falls some day to see them with their winter decorations of icicles. I am afraid having had one "out" I shall be getting restless. Our expedition occupied at the most six hours, including all detentions, and we must have sat better than one at the Dunsfords—I am now going to prepare wicks for candle making.

*Friday, January 4.*—Busy in the morning. . . . I shall spare you the details. In the afternoon I made, with a very little assistance from George, seven and a half dozen of candles, we have latterly made dip candles in preference to moulds, it is much more agreeable to

have one good making, and have done for a time, than be filling your moulds every day. A larger number of dips than I made to-day would have given very little more trouble, but my candle wicks did not hold out. I have got eleven candles to the pound, and I look with much complacency at my performance. I did not remark yesterday upon the necessity there is of keeping your eyes open on the Bush roads. Many are the boughs and branches that, displaced by the horses' heads, come bounding back with double violence upon the occupiers of the sleigh, and sometimes a tree across the road requires your stooping very considerably to pass safely under it. Without constant attention you might get severely hurt. The thermometer continues to rise a little. I suppose that this will really prove the thaw which invariably occurs about this time, and the expectation of which generally stops travelling. Afterwards, I suppose, the frost will set in with redoubled vigour. My observations of the thermometer are not very early, it has generally risen considerably before I come down-stairs. Mr. Dunsford had seen it  $24^{\circ}$  below zero last Sunday night, whilst at my morning observation it had risen to nine. John says Mr. Dunsford's thermometer must be incorrect, as ours of last winter was. He has only seen it so low on one occasion since he came to the country, and that frost was very different from any there has been this winter, or any other but that of '35-'36. Our two thermometers differ about three degrees at the freezing point, and about five at zero; the difference, of course, increasing as you descend still lower. We conclude that the one you sent us is the correct one. The hour before sunrise is generally the coldest in the twenty-four.

*Sunday, January 6.*—As Saturday night brings many

little duties with it, I did not take out my journal, and indeed the day had brought no incident with it worthy of record. Perhaps it may amuse Alice to hear that we are going to teach her Uncle John's dog "Rock" to carry messages up and down the hill, and he received his first lesson yesterday, having a little packet tied round his neck at the cottage, and being sent up here, when he was immediately relieved from it, and rewarded with a mouthful of meat. He is very good and docile, but at present lazy and useless; it will be something gained if he can trot down the hill with a note and bring back an answer. John is gone up to the Falls this afternoon to be ready for the town's meeting to-morrow morning. He is quite in doubt what to do about his journey to Peterboro, which should take place now, weather permitting, but whether this continuation of mild weather may be considered the thaw or not he cannot tell; if not, it has to come, for it never fails. At present something more decided would be very desirable, or the snow may be an inconvenient depth on the ground and interfere with chopping. There is very bad sleighing on the lake also; in consequence of a great deal of snow falling before the ice was very solid, there is water between the ice and snow, so that a very little real thaw would see the latter dissolved, and a fresh surface would be formed. This is of some consequence to John, for he purchased the crops at "Seringapatam" from Mr. Hamilton, and has at present upwards of thirty sleigh loads of hay on the other side the lake. One of John's objects in going to Peterboro now is to lay in provisions for summer. To the list of those already in store which my mother gave you has been added two pigs and another quarter of beef, and I hope shortly another fat pig of our own will be made into pork or bacon. I understand that Mr. Dennistoun's marriage

is not to take place for more than a year, a very unwise postponement, I should say. He still talks of visiting Scotland next year, and John and he may perhaps yet travel together. Mr. M'Laren also talks of being one of the party. My mother was amused at the picture her fancy drew of the two entering your drawing-room together—John leading the way, followed by a little man best described to you by Mr. Miller's legs, surmounted by John Gladstone's shoulders; next would follow the head and neck, and lastly, the remainder of Mr. Dennistoun's person. This last is quite our most inelegant specimen of a backwoodsman, but he is an active, steady farmer, and John says if anybody gets on well he will. Though this neighbourhood may not advance as rapidly as the sanguine once thought it would do, yet it seems beyond all danger of sharing the fate of the settlement on Lake Simcoe, which was much in vogue about the time John came out. Every one who could leave it has left it, and the few who remain are said to be living in a miserable way, deeply in debt to the distillers.

*Monday, January 7.*—It is thawing at last to our heart's content; a very few hours have changed the face of the lake completely, and now I hope, if we have but some good hard frost before more snow, there will be sleighing on it. John will benefit on the one hand, but he will be taken in for another sleigh drive, as I begin to wish for the pleasure of skimming along a level surface, and I do not think it will content me to go over to "Seringapatam" and come back on a load of hay. I wish Mrs. Fraser was at home to go and call upon. I cannot say that the thaw brings present comfort; it was almost one person's work for half the day keeping the water mopped up in the kitchen, as the joining of that lower roof to the house is not perfect. However, there

is an end of everything, even of the snow upon a house-top. It would take a much longer spell of this weather to reduce very apparently the ground's covering, but the stumps have all lost the "iced plum-cake" that surmounted each. The heavy rain has prevented John's return from the Falls to-day, and of course the Peterboro journey will not take place just yet. The change of weather has made my mother very rheumatic, and she has a cold likewise. I must say my bodily feelings are more comfortable in thaw than in frost, independently of the degrees of heat and cold. Although this weather is likely to be of very short duration, we cannot help giving a thought to our shambles, with all its array of beef, pork, and venison.

*Tuesday, January 8.*—Freezing again hard this morning, to John's great disappointment; another day's thaw would perhaps have dissolved the wet snow on the lake entirely, and then the real ice would have risen to the top. Now there will be double ice again, and unless there is a good spell of frost before more snow, the lake will be worse than ever. John walked home from the Falls this morning. I took a walk as far as the Duke's to enquire after the baby, who had been an invalid, and to carry a small donation of clothing. It had rather weighed on my mother's mind that she had so few opportunities for the exercise of charity, and she was somewhat pleased, I think, to hear that this family was a little complaining at being poorly off in some respects; but she has not had full satisfaction in her bounty, finding that they keep a servant. That should be a good land in which there is "neither poverty nor riches." My conscience has also been ill at ease on the same ground as my mother's, and I thought of commissioning you to relieve it for me, and asking you (my sympathies are all with the shivering) to lay out a



couple of pounds in red flannel petticoats. Aunt Alice has been very busy trying to dye a white one blue, but it is a failure.

*Wednesday, January 9.*—I have nothing to tell you to-night. The weather has been most unsatisfactory, nothing of a frost, and at last snow again. Lake travelling will be as bad as possible. I have been dipping into Laing's *Norway*, a book John has been reading with great interest. He thinks if the Yankees take possession here we must go to Norway. It seems, indeed, to possess some wonderful advantages; that of being nearer home is not a little one. At that distance one might almost make an annual trip to see one's friends in England.

This is post-day, but we have had no communication with the Falls; I wonder whether there is a letter for us or not. The interchange of letters seems very slow at present. The last letter we have had an answer to was written some time before the Regatta, an event quite belonging to bygone days.

*Thursday, January 10.*—I shall talk to you of nothing but the weather so long as it remains unsettled. We have another strong thaw, but we cannot hope it will effect what a continuation of the last might have done. The intervening frost has made the half-dissolved snow much more cold than it had been before; as ice we cannot hope to see it disappear in any reasonable time, so a frost is most desired. Yesterday snow has, however, disappeared from the surface of the lake, and the woods have been reflected on the wet ice as in water, reminding us of our summer scene. Aunt Alice has got a cold, the first since she came to Canada—from the thaw.

*Friday, January 11.*—Disappointed to-day, five newspapers and not one letter; surely the next post

will bring us one. The weather, too, is unsatisfactory; the thaw continues, doing the lake very little good, and I fear, elsewhere, a great deal of harm. The most comfortable thing to-day is that I have a very nice baking, and there is nothing that affects the spirits more than the well or ill rising of your bread. Our servant of last year, Mary, blessed with most admirable spirits, if her bread would not rise was the most melancholy creature imaginable. I quite understand it, now that the bread is in my department. I rather like it, and think at present that if I lived the next door to a baker, I would not buy my bread. Though I continue to patronise hop rising, I bake a little with leaven also, for if it escapes all sourness it is decidedly the best bread. My mother and Aunt Alice were busy, amongst other things, packing up some bedding against John goes down to Peterboro.

The last time he was there he and Mr. Wallis hired a house, and intend to have nothing more to do with the Hotel. As they expected, some others of the neighbourhood have wished to join in the expense and the advantages, so that it is to become a sort of backwoodsman's club-house. The rent is fifteen pounds, the first year's rent to be laid out on a stable. There are four rooms and a kitchen. John and Mr. Wallis, as originators of the plan, intend to keep one room for their own exclusive use. They think that a man and his wife, for house room and the use of the garden, will perform the services they will require, and on the whole expect that their visits to Peterboro will be made at rather less expense, and certainly with much more comfort than hitherto.

John has appeared exceedingly interested the last two or three days with an old novel you may recollect, belonging to Aunt Alice, *The Young Protector*. To-

night we have been each deep in our newspapers—the number was not so overwhelming as it sometimes is ; we see Miss Hutchinson's marriage in the Liverpool paper. John takes the *New York Albion*, which contains a good deal of light reading. I take a Coburg one, *The Church*, edited by a clergyman, and of course the Peterboro paper we have ; so that with our English ones we ought to be pretty conversant with the sayings and doings of the day. I wish I may have to tell you that it freezes to-morrow.

*Saturday, January 12.*—Well ! I had rather be a baker than a butcher. To-day's occupations were very much in the line of the latter. In the first place, we had all our shambles meat to take down and examine. The damage was not very considerable, but the trouble was so. However, the dogs are all rejoicing in a full meal, and will live well for a week to come—it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. We also cut up a quarter of beef. John was operator in chief, but the saw and the cleaver were also wielded by female hands. The kitchen scene would have entertained some of our English friends, and possibly shocked others. We have frost again at last, and a wind that would not disgrace Bootle. We shall not take very well to severe weather after the mildness of the last week. I was down at John's to-day, and was surprised to see the marks of his snow-shoes, which I had walked up in by way of experiment about a month since ; the snow was then very deep, and plenty has fallen since. Now there has been two or three days' thaw, with a good deal of rain, and the ground peeps through in many places, yet there are the marks of the snow-shoes as distinct as ever. I did not get a tumble when I made this one experiment of walking in snow-shoes, though rather near it two or three times. I once thought of having

a pair, but I think the chances of my requiring them are very small. I have little to take me out at all, and still less off the beaten track. The lake is in very nice order for walking, but the poor horses in their journeys for hay break through sadly. They were over both yesterday and to-day, and upset both times. Whilst writing of the present I have been talking of the past, and of very different scenes indeed—Rome, Naples, and Sorrento. How very different are the different portions of one's life, and yet in some respects life is the same everywhere and at all times, a mixture of good and evil, and it is my belief that the compound varies less in its proportions than we are apt at first to think, excepting some very few periods, which perhaps every one must separate from the general course of his existence as seasons of peculiar trial, or sometimes the reverse. That class of annoyance which forms the most common and prevailing troubles of every life leave happily but a slight impression on the memory, and therefore do we so often think other days better than these. If all the sorrows, past, present, and future, of the happiest life could be presented to the mind in one idea, it would be an overwhelming one; but we have happiness in our ignorance and forgetfulness, the very imperfection of the mind is its protection.—The tea tray has come in to relieve me from my moralising strain.

*Sunday, January 13.*—In continuation of my yesterday's theme, I am not at all sure that my remarks on the uniformity in variety of life will hold good throughout, and that in comparing age with maturity I may express the same sentiments that I do now when contrasting very mature years with early youth. For whatever may have been the accidental advantages of the last period, in addition to all the natural and

necessary ones belonging to our spring-time, there is one immense one to set against them all which we can never possess until we have trodden a considerable portion of our weary way—I mean experience; the composing effects of this are surely a great compensation for the departed joyousness of youth. But experience is now gained, yet the ills of life will be still accumulating around us, and our sources and faculties of enjoyment yet becoming fewer and weaker, what is there to prevent us from looking back with regret to the days that will be no more?—nothing but a more habitual practice of looking forward with a surer hope and an increase of that confidence which will never be disappointed.—I have now done, and must beg to be excused the digression, in consideration of its being my first deviation from matter of fact. If I have been sermonising a little you must recollect that it is Sunday! A fine clear morning brought us a very good congregation. John has been over to the Falls since dinner, but he returned to tea. My mother has been reading over some old letters of her own to Aunt Alice, written when we were children; in one she says of me that I am so short, she begins to fear I shall be dwarfish—what a change!

*Monday, January 14.*—A lovely morning, a moderate frost, thermometer 18, with a bright sun. There had been a sprinkling of snow, just sufficient to take the slipperiness from the ice. It looked very inviting, and John offered to take a walk with me. So, soon after breakfast I equipped myself, and we set off at a brisk pace in the direction of Sturgeon point. I told John he must never expect his wife to keep up with him as well as his sister. It was delightful walking on the lake, something like Southport sands in their best days. We followed the track of some wolves, which must have

passed in front of the clearing this morning. The sleigh is passing to and from "Seringsapatam" with hay, and the road is wonderfully improved since Saturday, when the horses broke through at every step, and even sometimes the runners of the sleigh; now, only every now and then a foot had gone through. As I have previously made you a partaker in all our hopes and fears, I must now call upon you to rejoice with us at the prospect of a good road. The frost appears to be strengthening; it is beautifully clear to-night, and three arches of the Aurora, one within the other, are displayed in the north. We have seen nothing so brilliant since as the exhibitions of the Aurora during the Regatta week.

*Tuesday, January 15.*—Another brilliant morning, but severe frost. John had one trip for hay before breakfast, and afterwards took another walk with me—not a very long one. We bent our steps in the contrary direction to yesterday. The wolves and foxes had been enjoying themselves as well as ever; I shall begin to be acquainted with the tracks of the beasts of the forest. I looked back at our own tracks, and wondered whether mine would be recognised as that of a woman, enveloped as are my feet in two pairs of stockings, a pair of socks, my house moccasins, and another pair over them. My head also has a better defence against cold than a bonnet. I manufactured for myself a fur cap, which comes down over my forehead and ears; otherwise, except on occasion of a sleigh drive, I do not wrap up a bit more than at home. John is mending his moccasins to-night, and it strikes me that a few glovers' needles would be a useful article to send us. He has filed a carpet needle for the present occasion into the proper angular shape. We are running short of large needles too; a paper of

short thick ones, calculated to take a very strong thread, would be convenient.

*Wednesday, January 16.*—I had a new pupil to-day, a little girl of the Daniel's about ten years old. I scarcely yet know what her attainments are, for she was dreadfully frightened, and though she appeared to know scarcely more than her letters at first, I shall not think it all my own doing if I find that she can read at the end of a fortnight. I hope she will get some good from me, however, for she has nearly two miles to come for her lesson. I have just taken out the piece of work I began on board the *Independence* for you, in hopes of getting it completed before Mr. Atthill goes to England, and before the arrival of number ten<sup>1</sup> enables me to commence in the stay-making line. My thoughts are at the Falls to-day in the letter-bag, wondering what its contents may be. The weather continues beautiful, and the horses make three trips a day to "Seringapatam."

*Thursday, January 17.*—A strong fog rolled up the lake this morning, leaving a hoar-frost on the trees at the opposite side, whilst the forest on this side retains all its blackness. John is beginning to wish for snow again, as the lake is sufficiently strong to be uninjured by it, the roads would be greatly improved, and he would be able to get down to Peterboro. We have had no communication with the Falls, so have still the pleasure of expecting letters.

I have no incident great or small wherewith to make to-day's journal interesting. I shall be reduced to telling you what we have had for dinner. Our larder now allows plenty of variety in that meal. It is provoking that we should just have our best cheer at the season when we have no one to partake of it,

<sup>1</sup> The boxes sent from England were all numbered.

and in summer, when we saw more company, and wished for something more than boiled or fried pork, we had to run the changes upon roast chicken, boiled chicken, hashed chicken, chicken rice, and chicken pie. I should say we used to get an accidental dish of fish when the Indians had been about. At present we do not shine much in the pudding line for want of eggs; and though our bread is super-excellent, butter at this season cannot be boasted of. By the bye, the Dunsfords laid in three hundred weight of butter for their winter supply, and consumed fifty pounds in three weeks. You see we gossip of each other's affairs here as elsewhere.

*Friday, January 18.*—We have your letter of the 15th of November to-day, acknowledging ours of the 29th of September, and the parcel by Mr. Toker. I am sorry William has one of his colds. Of course we have been talking and thinking about you ever since. We were quite aware, had John gone to England, some of his friends would have wondered, and perhaps censured; but it seems his brother would have been one of them. It would, however, have been all our own doing, my mother being the inventor and chief promoter of this plan. I still think if we, being pretty well, and feeling ourselves quite at home, and competent to manage all ordinary matters for ourselves, with willing friends at hand to assist us in case of extraordinary ones, should urge John to pay you two or three months' visit as our proxy, he should not be blamed for acceding to it. We were all surprised at Miss Hasterly coming to light once more. Pray where did she spring from, and how came she to lose sight of us? We have often wondered what had become of her. The last time we heard she was on the point of leaving England again to become a wanderer, but we were stationary for three years, at least more than two after that time. I



have wondered whether she will accept William's invitation. I can fancy her very well at your fireside in an evening, talking over old Roman days with William ; but I cannot very well represent to myself the long morning *tête à tête* you would have with her. Poor Miss Hasterly! I wonder whether she is more contented than she used to be, or has found out that happiness dwells not on earth, not even in our own favoured Isle. Alice, it appears, has grown more than we gave her credit for, as the moccassins did not fit. I can scarcely think of her and Ellen as anything different from what we left them, but I have formed a new picture of Anna Margaret. I wish I could see them all. Pray compliment Cicely for us on the new arrival. Did I ever tell you to thank her for the knitting she sent me?—it is very pretty—and did we tell you to give our thanks likewise at Fordbank for the acceptable box of sweetmeats? We have ten newspapers to-night, in which John and my mother are very deep. Aunt Alice is most diligently working a tea-pot rug. It is strange to see canvass work in her hands, but it is for use, and not for the amusement of the thing. She takes great interest in the brightness of the table. I am going to put away my journal and look over my Christmas bills.

*Saturday, January 19.*—I was so busy with my year's accounts to-day that I let my bread burn. According to my theory I ought to be out of spirits, but I feel to have accomplished a good deal of work in another way, which I throw into the scale against heaviness of heart, and it maintains the balance. I am rather sick of that last word. My mother and I sat up till three o'clock last night talking over subjects suggested by your letter. It was so mild (it had been actually thawing) that we let our fire almost go out,

and at eight o'clock the thermometer had nearly gone down to zero—it did so soon after. Whatever may be the changes of our English climate, they are not so great nor so rapid as those we have here. The Aurora has been rather bright to-night again. I have had an application to-day to take a new scholar, one of the Jordans, somewhat older, and I daresay more advanced than my other little pupils. I am now going to prepare our little supper. We always conclude the week with a glass of wine, and with ginger-bread, bun loaf, or something of that sort.

*Tuesday, January 22.*—My journal paused a couple of days in consequence of our excessive gaiety. On Sunday we, who have not had a caller since September, had two parties—the three gentlemen from Cameron's Lake, and Mr. Boyd. The former we regaled with rolled pig's head, bread and butter, and bun loaf, and let them depart. The latter we prevailed upon to remain to dinner and to stay all night; but it was with some difficulty. He is a most resolute home-stayer and a very industrious settler, and has chopped all his own land himself. Yesterday we had company at dinner again, the occasion of which was that Mr. M'Laren and Mr. Hutchinson were going down with John in his sleigh to Peterboro the next morning. We had a chatty evening, as we always have when the Major is of the party. Most of our backwoodsmen have some nickname amongst themselves, and "Major" is that borne by Mr. M'Laren, which he gets so much more frequently than his own name, that I am always afraid I may some time so call him in his own person, which would be rather unladylike. Mr. Hutchinson is a Liverpool youth, who came out this autumn, and is at present living with Mr. Wallis, as Mr. Higgin did with John. He is an uncouth mortal, but so

perfectly conscious of it, that he is very modest and harmless.

The two were off this morning, I fancy, about daylight. They have a bad day, I am sorry to say; it has been snowing day and night, and I think the road would be so heavy that they will scarcely reach Peterboro to-night. There is to be a ball at Peterboro this week, but none of our backwoodsmen intend to go. John will be on the spot, but he said he should not go. I think he may perhaps change his mind when the time comes. There seems to be more spirit among the ladies at present; two of the Miss Dunsfords are going down thirty miles to attend this ball. Mr. and Mrs. Dunsford have announced their intention of coming up here as soon as their horses are at liberty (now engaged in bringing up their possessions); meanwhile they appear rather impatient for a sleigh drive, as they were on the lake the other day, pushed by their men. The Dunsfords have Mr. Need's book, so we have a chance of getting it. I am rather anxious to see what "the elegant and refined mind of the author" has produced. These words have nearly become a nickname for Mr. Need, but its inconvenient length will, I think, prevent it from permanently superseding the old one. I wonder whether John will be able to bring up numbers nine and ten with him. We have never been apprised of their arrival at Coburg, but we ordered them there, and thence to Peterboro by the first opportunity. John thinks this will be his last visit to Peterboro this winter. We never ask him how long he is likely to be absent; it is much better both for him and us.

*Wednesday, January 23.*—This is the very coldest day we have had. Our thoughts turned immediately to our traveller, and we hoped he had not to drive into Peterboro this morning. The thermometer was twenty

below zero, with a strong wind. It blew very hard during the night; the mercury stood only three degrees above zero in our room whilst we were dressing. At noon it rose to five, and once we contrived to raise it to eight, which is the utmost a good fire has been able to do for it. I wanted my mother to remain in bed till after breakfast, and likewise to come down and dress by the parlour fire, where it is much warmer; but she will not be petted. The temperature of Aunt Alice's room is something higher than ours, but the thermometer fell there also to near zero at one time. It is the gable ends that are so dreadfully cold, being only of boards let into another like flooring, instead of logs and plaster; these shrink, and the lining ones also. Much of to-day has been spent in keeping ourselves warm, by which I do not mean standing or sitting over the fires, but going about piling wood upon them, and also with paste and brown paper seeking to keep out the cold wind. If I say much more I shall frighten you on our account. I must tell you then that the drawing-room is as warmable as ever, and does not smoke as it did last winter. When Aunt Alice and I were pasting up the wind-holes, my mother reproved us, saying it was ridiculous for people to come to Canada and not be able to bear a breath of air. She is determined not to be soft. All things are by comparison; after these frosts, when it is milder and I report the thermometer at nine or ten, my mother says—"Oh dear! I am afraid it is going to thaw." You will perceive that all my thoughts run upon heat and cold to-day.

*Thursday, January 24.*—The event contradicted my assertion respecting the thermometer in our room, for in the evening it rose actually to twenty, in consequence partly, no doubt, of the wind having fallen, and partly

owing to our having lighted the stove in my little room, which has not been done before, and part of the partition being only boards, a good deal of warmth would come through. These stoves are invaluable in a cold climate; I do not know what we should do without that in the hall. This morning the thermometer stood out of doors at what it was yesterday in our room, in which it had now risen as high as eighteen, and the weather continues to become milder, and we to think and talk less about it. We have had a little pig killed to-day, and are only waiting for a barrel of salt to kill a great one. This was school day; my new pupil is far in advance of the other children. My most distant scholars come twice a week, Mondays and Thursdays; the little ones likewise on a Wednesday, as they are close at hand, and it is worth while coming up for an hour. My mother's head is very rheumatic to-day; she keeps it well tied up.

*Friday, January 25.*—I have spent almost all the day at John's, the latter part of it attended by Kitty, giving his house a good scrubbing, where I had been sweeping and tidying beforehand. I came back with a strengthened conviction of the importance of woman, and congratulating myself that though I might be an old maid, I never could be an old bachelor. In summer we were able to send down every morning that he might have his bed made, and things made a little comfortable for him. Now he depends upon the occasional visits of the ladies, and these are less frequent than in the milder season. We have a change in the administration to-day. George Dick leaves, and in his place we have taken an old soldier, old in years also, a poor solitary being who came out for his grant of land, but being unable to manage it by himself, he disposed of it to a neighbouring farmer, who was to keep

him for the rest of his life. Such an arrangement was a bad foundation for a comfortable home, and I believe the old man is very glad to earn a little matter for himself. At present great activity is not required in our place. The Dicks are all together not worth their wages to us at this season, when the wood-cutting is the main work that has to be done; yet if the residue of their time were given to the farm, they would not be sufficiently on the premises.

The "old gentleman," as our girl calls him, is to receive woman's wages. We have only taken him for a month; he seems to think we shall consider him worth an advance after that time—we shall see. It is a curious climate; to-day it is actually thawing, and some of us complain of being hot!

*Monday, January 28.*—Another pause of two days, to be accounted for by the following details of them:—Saturday was one of the busiest of busy days. In the first place, we were both bakers and butchers, and the exercise of two such important callings filled up our morning. Soon after we had taken an early dinner, arrived John from Peterboro, announcing two other gentlemen as on their way, intending to reach us to dinner. So forthwith another meal was prepared, which, after waiting for our guests until near seven o'clock, we sat down to alone. An hour or two afterwards the travellers arrived, hungry of course, so the board was again spread with a substantial tea, accompanied by pork steaks.

The morning had been warm and relaxing, but a strong wind sprung up towards evening, in fact it was a regular Saturday night, that is, blowing as hard as it could, and freezing harder and harder every minute. Such weather has perpetually been the conclusion of the week. After the gentlemen departed about midnight,

we sat up till near two o'clock clearing out snowdrifts, etc., etc.

It blew fiercely all night and all the next day. After prayers on Sunday morning Mr. Fortye and Mr. Ferguson resolved to pursue their journey to the Falls, but the road was reported impassable, so they remained quietly at John's cottage until we summoned them to dinner. Some hours were again spent in clearing away snow, and endeavouring to make the house comfortable. The thermometer was never more than 3 below zero, but some of us felt the cold more than the severe frost of Wednesday, though that had been accompanied by a strong wind, but nothing to this one. I cannot give you an adequate description of the day. Old Edward, after contending with his spade against the overwhelming snowdrifts, was a perfect personification of winter. Hair, eyebrows, eyelashes, and everything that snow could cling to being perfectly white, all but his weather-beaten face looked like a complete incrustation.

Towards evening the wind went somewhat down, and we had the satisfaction of seeing this morning bright and clear, and comparatively calm. The travellers departed after breakfast, and John with them. How they found the road I cannot say, bad I suppose, for they intended to get part of the way back to Peterboro to-night, and have not yet got thus far. The lake having become the road since the thaw, we are now in the way of passers to and fro, and are not likely to be as many weeks as we were in November and December without seeing an individual.

We wrote you a few hasty lines yesterday. Much of to-day has again been spent in putting things to rights after the intruder, by which I do not mean the company, but the snow. My mother has just closed

Mr. Need's book. It is a slight affair to have attracted so much notice, as from its mention in the periodicals it appears to have done, and I think he has been well paid for the trouble of putting it together—it is something of a puff. John says he should like to get the book that he might send it to you with annotations. Our friend does not seem likely to redeem the character of travellers in general. His deviations from the undeniable, however, are chiefly in the spirit of book-making. Many little incidents, which serve to render the work amusing, could scarcely be produced at all except as extracts from a diary, where it is manifestly necessary that the first person must be used, and not the third.

*Tuesday, January 29.*—The party from the Falls arrived about breakfast time, which meal, however, they had taken before starting, so the travellers proceeded forthwith, and John re-established himself at home. My mother is exercising her old talent of cold-nursing, for John has brought a bad one from the expedition. He is not a very tractable patient, and talks of going up to the Falls again to-morrow, where he has some expectation of meeting numbers nine and ten. The weather, however, is now more moderate; we enjoy a reprieve exceedingly. This has been a delightful day for the parties assembling at Peterboro for the ball to-morrow; it was put off last week. Every one seems surprised at the Dunsford ladies making such a journey and taking up their abode at a wretched inn for the sake of attending one ball, where, moreover, they are perfect strangers.

*Wednesday, January 30.*—We have just been inspecting number nine. Number ten, it appears, is still at Whitby, and we are informed that the bundle of down is lost. It reached Kingston, but has not since



been heard of. Much as it is to be regretted, if we were to lose a package, there was scarcely one could have been more easily dispensed with. At least it is but one thing, whereas if all the sundries that have been spread before us to-day had disappeared, we should have had a very extensive loss. However, we need not quite despair of it. One small parcel we had sent out to John was a year and a half lost, yet appeared at last. Now let me thank you first for the merino cartoons, and for all your acceptable presents ; and, secondly, for all the trouble you have had in supplying our various wants. Everything appears to be safe except the bugle, which has got a little crush, but I daresay may be repaired at Toronto. The gooseberries and currants are, of course, perfect ice. We expected the bottles would have been broken, but they are entire, and the cork only forced out of one. The stockings are a most seasonable supply. I felt, in surveying our possessions, as if we should never want anything again. One thing the house most certainly is supplied with during our occupation of it, that is pie dishes. They are just what we wanted ; the tin plates, too, are very nice, and also the little tea-boiler, from the expedition with which warmth will be obtained. We are all much pleased with my Uncle Zachary's picture. It is exceedingly like him, and will forthwith decorate the drawing-room. The cartoons will, I think, be dining-room ornaments ; there certainly will not be such another house in the district. Aunt Alice is pleased with her pulpit cushion ; in short, we are all pleased. Perhaps it is as well that our pleasure does not come all at once, and that we have still number ten to look forward to. Some of its contents, however, begin to be a little wanted.

*Thursday, January 31.*—We have been hanging our

pictures. My Uncle Zachary looks beautiful just opposite to the drawing-room door, and the cartoons also look well in their places. I suppose it is a new method of mounting prints, at least I do not remember seeing any like them. They are very neat. You have sent us the sixth report of the British Association; we are still wanting the fifth. I do not know how it came that we were without it, for it must have been published long before we left. I have finished a rose and done three leaves of your screen to-night. You must not expect it to be a very perfect piece; my pattern is not first-rate, and is often unintelligible. Whether my alterations are always improvements or no is a question I cannot decide. I suppose, having given you thirty-one days' journal, I ought to take my leave, but as I have still a page and a half, and a day or two intervening before post-day, I will proceed with it as long as I can.

*Friday, February 1.*—This month is ushered in busily. A pig was slaughtered to-day, and my mother and I discovered that we are not quite perfect in our business yet, for the black puddings, which have rested with us for the first time, give evidence of our inexperience. You think I must have become a very accomplished housekeeper. There are certainly many things I can do which I might never have learnt in England, but there are many more of which I remain more ignorant here than I should have done elsewhere, and much of what I do know would prove of little value where things are so differently conducted. I am going to exercise my skill in shaping a ham to-night. That I consider my special province. My mother shines in rolled pig's head, and Aunt Alice in pork pies.

*Saturday, February 2.*—I now close my journal

until the first of April, when I intend to give you another peep at us. Meanwhile I hope to hear you feel enlightened by my details. As long as you have anything to learn of ourselves and our abode, I flatter myself a sheet of this kind occasionally will prove interesting. When you are fully informed, if I have grown very fond of journalising, I must give you an account of thoughts and conversations. I think I have been very matter of fact hitherto. I shall leave the last page for my mother. She reads my journals always with interest. If the writing were not so small I daresay you would have a few remarks across it, but it will be quite sufficiently trying to your eyes as it is.

Farewell, dear William and Margaret. God bless you both, and all that belong to you, and do not forget your affectionate sister,

ANNE LANGTON.

BLYTHE, April 1, 1839.

I can scarcely believe that three months have elapsed since I commenced my last journal, but so it is, and the period has arrived at which I promised to resume it. Meanwhile I have heard of the arrival of my first journal, and the acknowledgement of it encourages me to recommence.

I do not think this month a very favourable one for the interest of the present sheet. John says it is the most disagreeable one of the whole year, because nothing can be done. But as it is well you should see us in all our varieties, I will not be deterred from giving you my quarterly communication. At any rate, the month has opened most beautifully; closing our eyes to the frozen lake, the snow, and the

leafless trees, we might have thought it a summer's day, and a warm one too, though two days ago my mother felt the cold more piercing than at any time during the winter. I think cold is one of the evils that we do not retain fully in our recollection, but certainly a much less degree of it than what we think lightly of at Christmas seems very intense when succeeding immediately to some of the mild spring weather we have had. The rapid transition to heat is, however, more trying, and my mother's head has felt very much the oppressiveness of this day. Maggie Hamilton, who is still our guest, and I had a walk as far as Jordan's to visit a scalded foot. I think without some such object we should never have waded through all the mud we did. The roads are terrible at this season, the better parts of them somewhat reminding one of the dirty lanes near Blythe in the old world, whilst at other times one is indebted to some of the prostrate trees about for keeping one out of the deeper mire.

The Jordan family were busy in the sugar-bush, where we visited them and their boiling kettles. The sap runs beautifully on such a day as this. I counted the drops in a minute at two or three trees, and found them vary a good deal; the greatest number was 82. I drank a little of the sap in the most primitive of cups, the palm of my hand, and found it very cool and refreshing after a hot walk, though I thought it anything but pleasant when tasted under other circumstances. You who are an admirer of *eau sucrée* would, I daresay, approve. On our way we visited a family of new-comers, at present inhabiting Jordan's old shanty, though preparing one on their own land about a mile distant. Their name is Ingram, and they come from Ireland. I like to make you acquainted with all the *dramatis personæ* of the place, and two of the junior

branches here visit me three times in the week—a nice little smiling girl of about eight years old and a boy somewhat younger—with whom I am going over all the “a-bs and b-cs” that the others have done with. My other beginners are now coming on very nicely. I give holidays this week, as it is Easter week.

*Tuesday, April 2.*—John arrived before breakfast from the Falls, where he had been attending upon the blacksmith yesterday. He reports sleighing to be on the eve of departure, and now that the boating season approaches, the subject of a regatta is renewed, and there seems no hesitation about another being got up this year. Some of the Cameron's Lake gentlemen are building a boat in anticipation of it. John, with all hands and all the cattle, has been very busy preparing against the opening of the lake, filling the piers with stones. I hope they will now stand the break-up of the ice. Maggie worked as hard as anybody, and collected, John says, at least a ton of stones. She is a very fine girl, wild as the woods she has been brought up in, but very good-tempered, tractable, and companionable. We shall miss her when we part with her to-morrow. Her little affectionate ways often remind me of the gentle caresses of your little Alice, and a sigh escapes me. We ladies have been also exceedingly busy getting up our muslins, a very difficult operation with arrowroot as a substitute for starch. Do not imagine that the latter article is not attainable here, but we do not approve of its blackish-blue colour, and shall be glad to receive our supply from England.

*Wednesday, April 3.*—The weather continues most beautiful and summer-like, destroying the roads as fast as it can. No time to be lost if we restore Maggie at all before the waters open. So we entered the sleigh for the last time this season. Of a sleigh journey in

the present state of the roads you cannot form any conception. It is marvellous how wood and iron hold together, to say nothing of bones, as you are tossed up and down, driving right over everything that lies in your way, even to the stems of prostrate trees occasionally. The snow makes all comparatively smooth, but there is very little left now. We made our call on the bride, Mrs. Dobbs. She looks snug and comfortable in Mr. Jamieson's little cottage, but is evidently not half reconciled to the want of society. I am not surprised at her not finding her husband all sufficient. After partaking of some bread and butter with her, we pursued our journey over Cameron's Lake to Glenora to deliver up our little lady. It was curious travelling over ice under such a burning sun. The ice, however, is not much like ice. The horses' feet sink very deep in it, though if you do but steer clear of air-holes, there is yet a good solid foundation below. As we passed the Falls again on our return, I alighted at the Store to do a little shopping, and inspect the Major's spring fashions. Mr. Wallis came to speak to us in his working dress. I am quite accustomed to see John in his, but I could not help thinking now, had you a magic mirror to see us in, you would not guess it was Mr. Wallis we were standing talking to. We reached home about dinner-time, well shaken up, and are now sitting without any fire, as we might on a summer night. We shall take but ill, I am afraid, to a sharp frost again after this, yet it is to be expected.

*Thursday, April 4.*—Quite a summer's day again, much more like June than April. I wonder how it is with you, whether you have cold, piercing east winds such as I often remember at this season, or anything resembling this. I could exult now in the superiority of our climate for one half the year if mosquitos had

not been already seen—not felt as yet. I purposed taking advantage of this holiday week to get well forward with work, but I have not done much. I made an attack upon my corsets to-day, however, and feel a little appalled at the difficulties before me. My mother and aunt have also been very busy preparing work in the upholstering line—sofa and chair-covers.

It is well for us to get forward with necessary work, for Mr. Wallis threatens to find us some occupation this summer in preparing for a bazaar—not to be held in this country, you may suppose. He talks of going home next winter, and in that case would get up a bazaar at Glasgow for the benefit of church and school here. I daresay such a thing would answer very well, and a few hundred pounds would do a great deal of good here.

Population is increasing fast, and there must be some means provided for the education of the rising generation, or we may fall back behind the Indians. Of course if the plan is pursued, we shall all endeavour to send over what we can, and of course, too, your patronage will be solicited for this,—I prepare you. It is curious how being really interested in the object alters one's views with regard to bazaars. John, who used to be their great enemy, enters with much spirit into the idea of this, and has laid two or three plans for his own execution. I am to send sketches of log-houses and shanties, etc., etc. I wish our scenes were more beautiful and the artist more skilful. We altered our breakfast hour for the summer this morning; now we assemble at half-past seven, and next week we begin dining in the middle of the day.

*Friday, April 5.*—Hotter and hotter still. I have nothing more to say of the day, which is very well, for as I am going to write you a letter to-night I shall be glad to be excused the journal.

*Sunday, April 7.*—Yesterday being John's birthday he entertained his friends, so I was pouring out tea and coffee when I should otherwise have been writing my journal. The dinner was down at the cottage. There seems a sort of fatality attending the dinners given there, for notwithstanding the beauty of the weather, only three out of the seven invited arrived. One was an invalid, others, I suppose, were not inclined to walk round the lake they were accustomed to cross. Those who did come were Mr. Wallis, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Beresford. This last is a cousin of the Hamiltons, a very young man lately come to the country, and not yet, I suspect, reconciled to it and its climate. The viands prepared were more than sufficient for so small a number, which is unsatisfactory to the cookers of a feast, who like to see things pretty well eaten up. The party adjourned here in the evening. The Bazaar and the Regatta were chief topics of conversation, and will remain so, I daresay, during the period of preparation for them. You know what an engrossing affair a bazaar is. We used to say last year a regatta was as bad, or worse, and now we shall have both on our hands. However, the experience and labours of last year will not be lost, and the sails and flags are still there. I do not think our performance of the "Arms" on a white silk flag was a very successful one; the white shield on a white ground was ineffective. Some of us, and I was of the number, objected to the mantle behind the shield on a flag which of itself should look light and fluttering. It was suggested that the motto should surround the shield in a garter, and thus allow of a little shade behind it, but this I suppose would not have been quite correct, and John did not approve it on that account. Give us your opinion on the subject.

There was thunder in the night, and a good deal of



wind to-day, so that the air has cooled, and we are enjoying a little fire this evening. The open water is increasing very considerably; we can see a difference almost every hour. The lake, too, has risen very much, and now comes an anxious time for the pier. This is the third John has attempted, and if it does not stand, I think a fourth will not be tried, for everything has been done that can be done to make it secure. It will be a very great advantage to the landing, which is not a good one. There are no good ones on the lake. If it does stand, there is to be a boat-house in addition, which will also be a convenience, and, moreover, a great improvement to one of my contemplated sketches. I have two or three points chosen in this neighbourhood, besides some in other parts of the lake, which are of more dubious accomplishment. This winter chopping has made considerable alterations amongst the clearings to the back of us, but our panorama is very little changed. The butternut meadow to the right of our lake view is laid a little more open, and a few trees have been cut down on Dr. Dhiel's land, giving us a peep at the lake a little beyond the three tall pines. A much greater change, I hope, will be effected by the logging than by the chopping. John was just now wishing for fifty men and five yoke of oxen, but as he cannot have his wish, the wilderness of charred wood before us must disappear by degrees.

*Monday, April 8.*—Logging commenced to-day. We shall find great interest in observing the progress of the work, as it is directly in view of the house. John, who had dined at the Falls yesterday, came home in time to give the *Alice* a coat of paint. All this looks very spring-like. Within doors we were likewise preparing for the change of season, I darning some millions of little holes in our muslin curtains, my mother working

hard at her sofa-cover. Aunt Alice walked down to John's cottage to make straight after the derangement of Saturday. The weather is much more seasonable, fresh but very fine, the lake still opening visibly, large islands of ice, detached from the sides, are floating down the current. We have a new inmate in the family to-night—a very pretty little cat. As I have but little to say of the human part of the family to-night, I may give you a dog and cat chapter, and then "you" I think this time may mean Alice, whom I must call upon to sympathise with us in the loss of sundry pets. In the first place "Juno," a dog of such lady-like manners and so sweet a disposition that John said he should like his wife to be just like her, accompanied his master to Peterboro, and there disappeared, probably having won the heart of some Indian hunter. Since that, "Fury's" successor on the hearthrug, "Nettle," accompanying John on an expedition, strayed, and has not been seen since; but we do not give her up for lost, though it may be some time before any one goes to that part of the country, where she has most probably met with hospitality in some shanty or other. Lastly, my mother's pet cat, the greatest pet that ever was, has unaccountably disappeared. Notwithstanding all this we are never without a sufficient number of animals about us. Our old friend "Mowbray" is never very long without paying us a visit, though not the most welcome of guests, owing to his thieving propensities. This time, however, he has only emptied a sugar basin of its sugar, whereas last time he broke the basin into the bargain. John's cat is also a daily visitor, coming up as regularly as evening comes, and walking down with her master. Our new pussy, a great beauty, is just now tumbling in a basket beside the fire. As I expect you are all greatly interested with these details, I promise to inform

you on a future day how the stranger settles. John has commenced bazaar work.

*Tuesday, April 9.*—I am grieved to say the piers have given way to-day; there will be no boathouse this year, if ever, and the beautiful *Alice* must be exposed to the rays of a scorching sun. I suppose nothing will stand the force of the ice when it begins to move. I walked down to the lake to look at the damage. Within doors the day's proceedings have been highly uninteresting. I have been cutting open a pair of my new shoes, lacing them up, and concealing the lacing with a row of little bows down the front. If the novel appearance attracts attention, and I am asked if such is the fashion, I shall say I have just got them from England.

*Wednesday, April 10.*—The piers are just a mass of ruin to-day. John says if he ever builds one again it shall be within a sort of dock. Meanwhile the boats will be anchored in the bay, and the "coach" enact the part of ferry boat to take us to and from them. If the piers had stood now they would have had the boat-house built upon them, and might perhaps have given way next season, which would have been worse. It has been raining heavily the greatest part of to-day, which will help the opening of the lakes. This event takes place rather early this year. The 12th of April is the soonest John has known it, the 7th of May the latest.

Last spring water communication commenced on April 25th. The ice in its present state is in texture something like a honeycomb, so that when rain comes, and the cavities fill with water, the work of dissolution is very rapid, and sometimes the ice disappears so suddenly that the people here say it sinks. We ladies are all complaining of sore finger ends, some with upholstering, and some with stay-making.

*Thursday, April 11.*—What have I to record of this day? The banisters have been put up, and we have been so long unaccustomed to anything of the sort, that when on the stairs we feel as if we were in a bird cage. Rain came on again and put a stop to the logging, so the men came up to clean out our well, which makes a little confusion. In the kitchen it has been somewhat of a busy time this week. John's housekeeping does not commence until next month, so we have the men to feed, and only one domestic. That one, however, is Mary, a non-such in the way of getting through work—would she were everything else! Kitty, who will be back again in a few days, I fancy is but a child, but I do not think many girls of fourteen would have done as well for us this winter as she has done. Not that her capabilities are anything very great except in the cleaning way, and she is a capital scrubber, but she is so stout and strong that one did not feel that a little hard working occasionally would do her any harm, as one would have done with most girls. I much doubt her temper agreeing with any companion in the kitchen, and a second servant we are on the look out for. We are not equal to the same exertion in the heat of summer, besides which occasional bustles are more frequent.

*Friday, April 12.*—This morning I thought there was as much ice on the lake as yesterday, but a breeze sprang up soon after breakfast, and in a few minutes it had all floated down out of sight. There is not a vestige left, though I suppose lower down the lake will be still covered. I am surprised the water does not seem more of a novelty, as it is nearly six months since we saw it flow. John had been preparing his canoe for a paddle up to the Falls to-morrow. I hope he will bring down some letters with him. The Falls I think

must be fine at present, the lake is rising so rapidly. My walk down to Sturgeon point will be quite overflowed. I have been writing to Margaret Birley this afternoon. I gave her a hint of the intended bazaar. It was rather a shame while thanking her for the fruits of her industry to be making fresh claims upon it. Aunt Alice is discussing her poultry yard whilst I write. It is her entire charge, and begins now to repay her care. She brought in eleven eggs this morning, but now is ambitious of having a dozen as the produce of a day. In winter we were two or three months without seeing one, but another winter the hens will be more comfortably lodged, and perhaps supply us better. The poultry here must suffer dreadfully from the cold. It is quite a common thing for them to lose their toes. One of ours lost an entire foot, though it contrived to walk about very well with the stump and the half foot that remained on the other leg. Some of the more weakly birds were frozen to death.

*Saturday, April 13.*—This morning, in spite of a strong adverse wind, John set out in his canoe for the Falls. We watched him round the point, as we did many a time last year, and shall, I daresay, many a time this year. My mother felt a degree of anxiety on account of the Cameron's Lake ice coming down the stream, so it was very satisfactory to see him land an hour earlier than we expected his return. He brings us more newspapers, but only one letter, and that from Rosalie. She mentions her brother Jules having seen you in Manchester. You never named it. Is he at all like what he used to be? She gives no particular news, but says Yverdun is become an exceedingly quiet place, no foreigners at all reside there.<sup>1</sup> I have been engaged this afternoon making

<sup>1</sup> Rosalie Morel was Aunt Anne's early companion and friend at Yverdun.

up my remaining store of tallow into four dozen portly-looking dips, eight to the pound. My last making was twelve dozen, and I think the larger number is very much as soon accomplished as the smaller one, for they gather more tallow when thoroughly cooled, so that with many I need not go through them so often as with few. Now that I know how to manage the matter I find it positively a cleanly operation. Mary looked horrified when I set up my apparatus in the kitchen, which had just received its Saturday polish, but I do not think she found it a bit the worse when I had packed away my things again. The two elder ladies were still very busy upholstering. I do not think any ladies on the lake have better fitting garments than our two arm-chairs. As the fine season approaches we begin to think of the entertainments we must give to the new-comers. You would have been amused to hear John and me discussing the important subject this morning, asking each other with perfect solemnity, as if we had fifty to choose out of, who shall we have to meet the Dunsfords? Answer—Mr. Wallis and Mr. Dennistoun. And who shall we have to meet the Dobbs? Answer—Mr. Dennistoun and Mr Wallis. We cannot have the ladies to meet each other owing to our limited accommodation. Our little cat has taken the first opportunity to run away, which we do not much regret, for though a great beauty it is evidently not of a tameable disposition, and a kitten of our own bringing up will suit us much better. Such an appendage to a household is an absolute requisite here, or the mice become very destructive. Provided as we have been, however, I never have seen any tokens of the little enemy.

They parted at the age of fourteen, but kept up a regular correspondence until Aunt Anne's death in 1893. Rosalie died a year or two after.

*Sunday, April 14.*—We have had changes in the household to-day. Mary has departed, and Kitty has returned to her place, bringing with her another girl, as she knew we wanted a servant. After some deliberation we engaged her for a month, though by no means promising to be all we could wish in a servant. She is too young in the first place, only seventeen, whilst her companion is but fourteen or fifteen. But girls marry so early in this country, that a person of steady years is difficult to obtain, and one with any but the commonest sort of knowledge quite out of the question. Perhaps this one may do as well as any other we should have got, though to you it must appear a curious way of engaging a domestic, simply on the recommendation of another. But here she was, some assistance we stood greatly in need of, with several work-people about, and some of John's valuable time will be saved by thus terminating the search. I will inform you on a future day how the stranger settles, and with more perfect reliance on the interest you will take in the subject than when the same promise related to the little cat. I hope the result will be different. The weather has been beautiful to-day. After dinner my mother for the first time equipped herself for a walk. We rambled down to the water's edge, of course, as the newest thing to be seen. John got the *Alice* afloat, ready for an expedition to Ops to-morrow, and after visiting a young calf, inspecting the pig-styes, etc., we finished up by visiting John, and having a performance on the key bugle. He is not quite satisfied with his progress on the instrument, but it is too soon to despair. I think a quintette of two bugles and three voices would sound very sweet from Mr. Wallis and John in one canoe, and the three Miss Dunsfords in another.

*Monday, April 15.*—Many happy returns of the day to little Anna Margaret. I wonder how you are keeping her birthday, and whether she is yet your youngest. God bless you all from beginning to end. I have an addition to my children to-day, which I thought sufficiently numerous before, but a second Daniel (no quotation) is come to get a little learning along with his sister.

John is off to Ops this morning, as also Mr. Wallis, both with their boats laden with sacks to bring corn out of Egypt. The day has been lovely. A coat of paint has been given to the exterior woodwork of the house, and the pump is put down in the kitchen, a perfect luxury after the slopping of buckets up and down a well. The first day of a new servant is always an uncommonly disagreeable day, and this has been by no means an exception, but I see no reason to think any worse of our speculation than I did yesterday. I have been just now engaged in killing mosquitos on the windows. They come out early, which gives reason to hope that a sharp frost may make destruction amongst them. Last year at this time we had complete winter; now the cattle can pick up what almost keeps them. Good-night! We are just going to have some cake and wine in honour of your little two-year-old.

*Tuesday, April 16.*—We scarcely expected John at home last night, but he arrived just in time to drink his niece's health. He brought "Nettle" back with him. Aunt Alice's greeting of the little animal was quite touching. She had vowed a vow never to give her affections to another dog after losing "Fury," and would not acknowledge to have broken it; but on this occasion she betrayed herself. The important operation of laying out the grounds has commenced to-day. We have obtained a clever workman for about a week, but



longer he is not to be had. Unfortunately workmen of any kind are hard to be met with at this busy season, or much might be accomplished in a short time under his direction. There will be some trifling alterations from the plan sent to you, of which you shall be duly informed. Spring-time makes busy work, notwithstanding the men and women about the house. John was to-day chopping firewood, I kneading bread, and the other ladies also busily occupied. This department of mine I intend now to resign, but to-day I had to pay the penalty of mismanaging matters so as to have to bake on a washing day. There is no unmixed good in this world. A washhouse, a boiler, and an oven are great comforts, but they consume an immensity of wood. We have been purchasing some small cakes of sugar for the bazaar to-day. It has not been at all a good sugar year; the hot weather put a stop to the run of sap, and though a good deal may be collected now again, it is too late for purity of taste. They say it tastes of the bud now.

*Wednesday, April 17.*—Your birthday, my dear William, you may believe is not forgotten amongst us. We each and all of us give you our very best wishes. How very limited are our means of adding to the happiness we desire for you! Yet indirectly, I believe, there may be many thoughts connected with the absent part of your family which will bring peace and comfort to your bosom. May the peace and happiness that blesses you be the most substantial and enduring of all peace and happiness!

We have a return of winter to-day, though not very severe yet. John anticipates that, however, and would be glad to get it over before there is anything above ground. He has been preparing the glass for his hot-bed to-day. Within doors I have nothing to record

but the dull routine of every day. I say I must go out in search of adventures, or you will tire of the sameness of my journal. As you must take an interest in the progress of the house, I may tell you that our porch door was put up to-day. We are now going to drink your health.

*Thursday, April 18.*—Nothing at all narratable to-day but the progress of the mansion. We go up a step to the front door now, instead of treading as hitherto on a block of wood. The entrance looks quite handsome, but the rude substitute for the correct thing had ceased to look amiss in my eyes. To have a very graphic description of things in the backwoods it should be given by a new-comer. The inconsistencies and incompleteness become too familiar to be observed. As an instance of the former, I will tell you that in Mrs. Dobbs' little drawing-room, which was very neatly set out with books, handsome work-boxes, and alabaster ornaments, there hung also a saddle. As an instance of the latter, I give you a sketch of one of the nearest objects to me at the present moment—our dining-room fireplace, where plaster, stones, and brick-work are very tastefully mingled, the *tout ensemble* being something much in advance of its appearance last year at this time. This, too, you must think harmonizes uncommonly well with a Turkey carpet! I rather think the interest of my sketches will be quite superseded by John's handiwork. He is taxing his ingenuity for the bazaar, and producing models of things purely Canadian. He says he is afraid some of the rudeness necessary to correct representation may, by the uninitiated, be considered the clumsiness of the workman. I think his productions will look only too neat and nice. There will be something very novel in this bazaar, for, at least as far as we are con-



THE OVEN.

cerned, it will be furnished chiefly by gentlemen. It may be called the Backwoodsmen's bazaar. I talk of setting up a Store *à la* Mrs. Clegg for the benefit of the bazaar. I have many materials for fancy work from the residue of my Bootle performances, and the ladies of the neighbourhood who are disposed to be industrious on this occasion might be glad to supply themselves.

*Friday, April 19.*—We have seven men at work to-day; this looks like getting on. So many mouths make large bakings, and whilst superintending the operations at the oven to-day it occurred to me that a representation of it might add something to the interest of this stupid journal. Now I must go and see what the oven has been doing for me whilst I have been doing it so much honour. It has returned the compliment very handsomely. I dare not give any shading to this complicated little sketch for fear of making matters worse. Like John, I am afraid it will be supposed the inexpertness of the artist has produced this confusion. But I am persuaded, could you view the spot with your own eyes, the wooden background would appear quite as inexplicable.

This is newspaper day, I am sorry to say, not letter day. They are all busy informing themselves of the world's doings, and I am about to follow the example.

*Sunday, April 21.*—I wrote no journal yesterday. I must tell you that a very important event terminated the week's proceedings. A little forest sprang up about us in the course of the day. It was a fortunate circumstance that we obtained other hands, and were thus enabled to advance things so as to get some planting done this season. The appearance of the place is already much changed and greatly improved, but of course we are indebted to the filling up of the

imagination for completing the rough sketch. A few months will make the grass grow, and really when our trees are in leaf they will look respectable. John looks at all these improvements with great complacency. My mother and I have been sauntering about a little this afternoon contemplating the beauties of Blythe. I expect we shall be sowing seeds and rambling the woods for flower roots very soon. John is gone to the Falls. He frequently does so on a Sunday. Formerly he, Mr. Wallis, and Mr. Dennistoun dined with each other alternately on that day. Latterly the central situation has been the place of rendezvous, though I believe our objection to the day as one of regular entertainment has led John to invite but seldom on it. We had a long talk about former days last night, sitting up to a very improper hour to do justice to the theme, and coming to the conclusion that not many families have had more variety in their life than ours. It is not a monotonous world, whatever other complaints we may have to make against it. We have another addition to our large family, for next week the kitchen party will be ten, so that our two girls and the mistresses too will be pretty busy. Our new damsel is by no means promising, and both want to be perpetually reminded. The more we do it, the more they depend on us, and the less again we trust to them, so that, like the vibrations of a pendulum, the thing is kept up *ad infinitum*. Such as ours, I suppose, is the ordinary sort of Canadian servant. We did not meet with our full share of this sort of trial when we first came out. We had others, and Providence never sends more than we can bear. At present our household would be a bustling one whatever sort of domestics we had, therefore it is less important. But when the labourers live elsewhere, and we might have a little more quietness

and leisure, it would be most desirable to obtain something better. It is very difficult to portion out the work of cook and housemaid between two who are both of the genus "scullion." Excuse me if I entertain you too much with domestic matters, but my thoughts run a good deal upon them at the present. My mother, too, just looks off her book to ask what we must give the men for dinner to-morrow, to which I answer beef or pork, or both. We are well off for milk at present. Three cows have already calved, and we have churned four times. We did not begin till June last year, but this was in a great measure owing to the cows having strayed. I hope they will make no *scapata* this year. The woods will begin to be very tempting soon when the wild leeks spring up, at which time, if the cows are not carefully kept from them, the milk is untasteful. I have just detected a huge mosquito in the act of sucking my blood. This is the first bite, but, alas! the forerunner of innumerable ones. If I could make a compact with the creatures I would freely deliver over the rest of my person to their attacks, on the condition that they should let my feet alone. It is hard to have one's hands both chapped and mosquito bitten at once, but the pickle-tub and the kneading-trough this week, together with fire and wind, have made me suffer more from chapping than I have done except once before.

*Tuesday, April 23.*—I let my journal alone yesterday in order to let my matter accumulate. There was so little worth noticing in our proceedings. Levelling is the order of the day, and it is tedious work. I am sure the poor oxen must most cordially agree with me. I have felt quite sorry for them going up and down a short hill the whole day through. John set off to the Falls very early this morning, and returned towards

evening with a scow load of trees. We shall begin to look quite umbrageous.

We have already been making comparisons between this and the old Blythe, but except that both deal in gable-ends, two places could scarcely be much more dissimilar. I have had a very good day's work at my corsets (this is addressed to Margaret exclusively). I have tried them on, and I call for your congratulations, as they fit very comfortably. In my present satisfaction I think I shall not be afraid of undertaking a pair again, but I may change my mind before I have stitched all my bastings. We have just got a large bell fixed on the roof of the kitchen, which gives it rather a knowing look. We had a flag-staff on the front gable-end last year, but one severe thunderstorm it entered John's head that it might act as a conductor. It was accordingly taken down, and the house has looked sadly cropped since. I long for the leaves to be out that I may send you a more favourable representation of our dwelling. But whenever I think of my sketching rambles I am obliged to take the mosquitos into my anticipation, as somewhat destructive of enjoyment. They have had several repasts already at my expense.

*Wednesday, April 24.*—This day has not been prolific in novelty, but I may mention three circumstances that I have omitted to notice before. First, the arrival of Mr. Jamieson at Peterboro, who consequently may be expected up here shortly; secondly, the arrival of a much more important person, namely, a blacksmith. We have had one occasionally at the Falls, but now he is permanently settled. As you have never sent a horse five-and-twenty miles to be shod, or waited three or four months for some trifling yet perhaps essential performance of the furnace, I cannot expect you to understand what an advancement in the

settlement we consider the establishment of this worthy amongst us. My third omission was a fact deserving the attention of your philosophical society. On Monday afternoon there was observed by all the workmen a dark spot on the sun's disk. That they did not draw our attention to it we all exceedingly regret, as the appearance must have been very extraordinary. The spot is described to have been about the size of a saucepan.

I expect we shall hear something more about it, for so conspicuous an object cannot well have been generally overlooked. There was a "Bee" to-day for making a road up to the church. The weather has been very unfavourable for the proceeding; we have had a regular summer thunderstorm. I wonder whether there is a letter for us at the Falls to-day; we begin to think one quite due.

*Friday, April 26.*—Last night I was so bent upon completing one half of my corsets, save the binding, that I did not take my pen in hand. You must think from my occasional mention of this piece of fancy work that it is at least as tedious as a yard and a half square ottoman. But I have rarely taken my work out until after tea. Tea and candles generally come together, and then follows, or ought to follow, the journal, for if I put it off until later, it often happens, as last night, that I get engrossed with my needle until the word is spoken, "We had better go to bed." At that time we move, but it by no means follows that it is to our beds, or even to our chambers.

The change is frequently merely from a circle round the table to a semicircle round the fire, and another half-hour or more passes before we really begin to go, after which an inspection of the larder always precedes the final departure. So you see we are very little



changed. The scow load of trees were planted yesterday, but make very little show. We mean to go on by degrees, planting a little every spring and autumn, and in time we shall have a very pretty place. To-day I was tempted by an abundance of eggs to do a little in the confectionery line, and have manufactured some biscuits as imitation of some square sweet ones that you may remember we used to patronise at Bootle. They say I have been tolerably successful.

We have had the telescope out to see if we could not descry the "saucepan" on the face of the sun. There it was, handle and all, and I can well fancy that the sun being shorn of his beams, as the other evening, when he looked like a red ball in the heavens, it would be very well observed by the naked eye. I think I have seen a spot as large, but never so dark. We have had communication with the Falls to-day. The post brings nothing from England this week.

*Monday, April 29.*—I have again omitted two days to write my journal, not so much from the want of interest in the day's transactions, as from the peculiar interest of the evening ones. Saturday was spent, as all Saturdays are, in bringing the business of the week to a convenient stopping-place, and yesterday in all the quietness of a wet Sunday. But the evenings of both days were occupied in the perusal of some of John's early letters from this country. Having since become somewhat acquainted with the scenes and *dramatis personæ*, you may imagine me interested in returning to the early history of the settlement, and amused with comparing the ideas it had before led me to form with actual impressions. I thought, although I was hopeful at that time, and John confessedly too sanguine in some of his views, yet could I have had a vision of the appearance of things five years later how thankful I

should have been, and if I should have been so then, I hope I am so now. Draining and fencing are the present things in progress, the ornamental pausing for a time. I do not know when so much labour has been bestowed upon the place as the last ten days, nor when ten days will produce such a great improvement again. John has been constructing a novel form of fence to-day, rather more substantial than the ordinary ones, in the hopes of preventing the intrusion of Aunt Alice's feathered friends. I am afraid her poultry yard and my mother's garden will not be on the most amiable terms. There was great alarm about the cattle last night—they had strayed to the woods. However, they had the bell with them, and were found this morning, but their milk will not be useable for a day or two.

*Tuesday, April 30.*—The month terminates as it began—beautifully. John has been as busy as possible in his garden all day. If the month has been a dull one for journalising, it is not, as was prophesied, because nothing could be done, but rather the reverse—too much has been going forward. John says he never was so advanced with spring work at this season before, and yet all the extra hands have been engaged in beautifying the place. Just before dinner a canoe arrived with Mr. Beresford and the youngest Hamilton. They partook of the meal before departing again. We heard from them that Mr. Jamieson, who is arrived, has given Captain and Mrs. Dobbs notice to quit, and that we shall lose them from the neighbourhood earlier than was intended. It was evident, however, before that they would not remain long. We must make haste and give them our invitation, or we may lose the opportunity of evincing our hospitable intentions. I have contrived very well to make my thirty days occupy about the right quantity of paper, and I have

just left what may serve to reply to the letter which we surely must have by to-morrow's post. John will be at the Falls, for he goes to pay his respects to Mr. Jamieson. After talking to you every night for a month I feel an almost insuperable aversion to soliloquizing in my own private journal, which suffers accordingly. But a slight record I find most useful to fix dates and refer to occasionally. When there is but little to mark the time one gets confused. I have said little of my mother's occupations lately, for they have been very uniform. She has been determined to do her work very fully and completely, and, with some assistance from Aunt Alice, has manufactured a complete set of chair-covers, sofa-covers, etc., and a second cover for each of the great chairs, besides refreshing all that wanted refreshing. Meanwhile I have been house-keeper-in-chief. Afterwards mantua-making must have its turn. Then we shall change places, and I shall preside at the needle. I must now take my leave of you until July, when I intend you to see something of our summer life. I am afraid my journals diminish in interest, at any rate I am sure there is a sad falling off in the writing. From my recollection of the first it was a very neat affair, and this is much the reverse. Do you intend to comply with my request, and send a month's journal, that we may see *you* a little in detail? I leave one page to answer to-morrow's letter, and if we do not get one I have a great mind it shall go empty.<sup>1</sup>—Ever, my dear brother and sister, most affectionately yours.

*May 1* (crossing the last page).—My journal missed the post owing to a storm we had on Sunday, a sort of miniature storm it would appear to you islanders. Never-

<sup>1</sup> *N.B.*—There was no letter, and the last page is filled with a long list of commissions, chiefly garden seeds of various kinds.

theless it unroofed our root-house, uprooted sundry trees, carried the cover of the hot-bed to a considerable distance, overthrew fences, and might have been the destruction of the *Alice*. She dragged her anchor, but happily fastened again when not more than her own length from the shore. We watched her anxiously for a couple of hours in this perilous situation, when the waves were much too high to allow of a canoe going out to her even at that short distance. At one time John was just going to take his canoe for the purpose, when the wind raised it up, turned it two or three times over, and deposited it amongst stumps and stones, so that it got sundry awful holes in its bottom. Meanwhile hands had been mustered to the number of four, and, taking advantage of a lull in the storm, the precious *Alice* was placed in safety on the sandy beach in the bay, at the cost of a mid-way wetting to all and a complete ducking to others. Yesterday my mother undertook an expedition she had long talked of to see some of her neighbours, and we walked nearly two miles back. Tired she was certainly, but not so much as might have been expected considering how unaccustomed she has been to straightforward walking. It is to be hoped no other event will occur before post day to induce me to cross any more.

JOURNAL, July 1, 1839. Blythe.

*Monday, July 1.*—On entering upon this month's journal allow me to say how much I have been gratified by the reception its predecessors have met with, and also express a hope that this may deserve the same approbation. It is to exhibit us under summer circumstances. That season has only just commenced; a week ago we were still enjoying fires and notwithstanding our early

spring the country is in a very backward state, owing to the long continuance of high and cold winds. Often have we compared them to Bootle breezes, and declared them every bit as bad. Now at last we have seasonably hot weather, not any way oppressive as yet.

Of this first of July I have little to say, but of yesterday somewhat more. John went down in the evening to Bobcaygeon on his way to Peterboro, taking with him a box for you, to be placed under the care of Mr. Need, in readiness for a friend of his shortly to set out for England. I hope it may not be long delayed on the road, but we know little of the traveller's plans. I am rather in expectation of a stupid month, partly because the last was a stirring one. I do not mean that we have been stirring, for not one of us has once moved from the clearing, but our little world has been stirring round us. Miss Hamilton's return to the neighbourhood, with Mrs. Fortye's visit to it, and the departure again first of one, and then of the other, has brought them passing and repassing various times to Blythe. Some of the gentlemen from the lower end of the lake have been also up, amongst others Mr. Need, a very great stranger, and, to conclude, we had last week a large "Bee." At our little one last year to raise the root-house we had some ten or a dozen men, but this time there were near forty, and seven yoke of oxen. Six or seven acres were logged up during the day. We walked down to take a view of the black and busy scene. One ought to see at what cost of labour land is cleared to appreciate even our bustling prospect. I have another reason for apprehending a stupid month. We have just lost one of our servants, and not replaced her. Mary has been with us a few weeks, but was unable to remain from the same indisposition which obliged her to leave us last year in the

hot season. The girl we have is an exceedingly quiet, good-tempered creature, and in her own department suits us very well, but she is not quite equal to the performance of double duties, and I hope they will not long rest upon her. There are four fishing lights on the lake to-night, which look very pretty moving up and down, but this holds out no prospect of a dish of fish to-morrow. The Indians find it more convenient to take their produce at once to the Falls, where they have a certain sale for it. We are all pulling very wry faces to-night at the mosquitos. John's man reminded me to-day of a "vestal's" head our pencils used to be well acquainted with. He had draped himself precisely in the same manner for protection from the sanguinary foe.

*Tuesday, July 2.*—The first news this morning was bad news. The mother of our youngest brood of chickens had been destroyed by some unknown murderous creature in the defence of her little ones, which were all safe. Miss Currer, mistress of the poultry yard, immediately nominated me guardian. My mother strongly recommended the destruction of the chickens, as we have less time to bestow upon such nurslings than we used to have at Bootle. I acquiesced in the wisdom of the advice, but felt my honour concerned in the protection of the interesting orphans committed to my charge. So I rigged up a little mansion for them, where they are snug and comfortable, though not exactly very happy yet. We have been getting all our mosquito blinds into order; they have not been required hitherto, as there has been so little to induce us to sit with open windows. We have had the variety of a thunderstorm to-day. The lake looked almost as black as my Japan ink, from which you may infer that the last-named is not exactly what

it ought to be. I fancy it will not stand hard freezing. Our storm was accompanied by an abundance of rain, which has made my mother's fresh-raked flower-beds look much blacker than my Japan ink, and the fields as bright as emeralds. The whole concluded with a fine clear sunset. My mother amused herself during the storm with repeating poetry, a thing I have not done this very long time. The old world is the world of romance and poetry. I daresay our lakes, waterfalls, rapids, canoes, forests, Indian encampments, sound very well to you dwellers in the suburbs of a manufacturing town; nevertheless I assure you there cannot well be a more unpoetical and anti-romantic existence than ours.

*Wednesday, July 3.*—We sent early to the post this morning, for we feel more impatient for news when without our gentlemen. Ten newspapers were delivered to us, but that was not exactly what we wanted. However, my mother and Aunt Alice are both deep in them at present. I think the brute creation is more interesting than the human beings around us. I could give you a piece of pussy's domestic history to-night, but as I was on the subject of chickens yesterday, I must refrain. Suffice it to say that an hour or so this morning was lost in observation. How the peculiarities of a family survive transplantation to another soil!! In the afternoon, judging the flies to be rather quiet, we sallied forth in a body to gather strawberries in John's garden, and brought up something more than a quart, which to-morrow will be a pot of preserve. Do not laugh at our small doings. There is an abundance of strawberries in the clearing, if one could have patience and endurance to gather them.

*Thursday, July 4.*—We all joined in a little tirade against Canada this morning, my mother's ground of

complaint being the slovenly nature of its inhabitants, instanced by the scattering of lime and water over her flower-beds. Poor country! it bears the blame of all the various sins of the motley herd that inhabit it, besides the sins inherent in itself that it has to answer for. I grumbled a little at the necessity of storing all your summer provisions in the winter, and at the annoyance of unpacking and repacking barrels of pork, boiling brine, etc., etc. Miss Curre never declines joining any one in a philippic. It has been cold and rainy again to-day, and we made a good fire to welcome John at home, who arrived from Peterboro to tea. He was accompanied by Mr. T. Fortun, a Peterboro swain, and Mr. McCall, late of Sturgeon lake, who, after a five years' absence, I think, being settled at New York, is come up to see his old friends. A substantial tea-table was spread for the voyagers,—cold ham, buttered eggs, tarts, cakes, etc.,—soon after which the gentlemen retired, having left Peterboro at one in the morning. Our caterer I find, instead of a box of candles, has brought us a cask of tallow, much to our disappointment, having already abundance of work on hand. I have sometimes thought, and I may as well say it, now that it is grumbling day—woman is a bit of a slave in this country.

*Friday, July 5.*—The breakfast horn did not blow till late this morning, out of consideration for our sleepers below. After their departure John gave the last coat of paint to the *Ninniwish*, a skiff he has had built this year for his own single use. The *Thetis* of last year was too heavy, and, moreover, is the boat that everybody comes to borrow. *Ninniwish* is the Indian for "little swamp," or "little devil,"—I do not know which is the literal translation,—and it is the lady-like denomination by which one of the Peter-



boro belles is known in the tribe. My mother and aunt preserved the quart of strawberries, whilst my avocations elicited another mute invective against pork and pork-barrels, after which I set about reducing the cape and sleeves of a gown to modern dimensions. Perhaps you may think this an unnecessary labour in the backwoods of Canada!

*Saturday, July 6.*—The occupations of this day very various, winding up the affairs of the week. At one time I might have been seen perched upon the roof of the kitchen, where the fixing of a mosquito blind took me. I discovered that I had once been younger, namely, in the days of our Champitet exploits; nothing very extraordinary, seeing that I kept my 35th birthday last month, and may now sing with Dante *nel mezzo del camin de nostra vita*, etc. I paid John a visit in the barn, where he was up to the ears in black and green paint, beautifying the *Alice*, and afterwards put the green braid on to a boating dress for him, made after the fashion of the navy frocks, though different colours. This reminds me that I have never sent you a backwoodsman in his summer costume, but I do not promise to use my pencil again until we procure another servant.

*Sunday, July 7.*—We were in expectation of Mr. Need dining with us to-day, but he has not arrived, as has been very frequently the case on former occasions. It is rather a long way to come to dinner, but this time we expected him for two dinners, as to-morrow the party from the Falls are to be here—a party made for Mr. M'Call, the stranger. The mosquitos are sailing about in all directions, and make a great commotion amongst us, producing some exclamations, jumps, clapping of hands, etc. It is no joke to any one to be so worried, but to my mother it is a very serious annoyance. The bites



VIEW FROM OPPOSITE SHORE.

inflammation exceedingly with her, and sometimes even produce something of the prickly heat, but this I think is due more to the black fly than the mosquito, and most happily that does not often come into the house, so that by keeping a close prisoner you can escape it. The mark, too, of the black fly is much more disfiguring, resembling much a little leech bite, and the first prick being less painful. The blood is sometimes streaming from you in various directions before you are aware that you are much bitten. You would not readily imagine the amount of resolution it requires to sit still making a sketch when the flies are bad. The mosquitos will bite through almost anything, and the black flies are most ingenious in finding their way through all defences, and once within the folds of a closely tied handkerchief they do more mischief than if you had left them free access. If John takes up my journal I expect he will quiz my long dissertation upon flies. He is often inclined to laugh at us. He does not suffer as much as we do from the duration of the bites, which he attributes to his greater degree of patience; but I am perfectly certain the effect is various in different persons. After sketching one afternoon I counted thirty-eight bites on one foot, and twenty-six on the other, to say nothing of hands, face, neck, etc. I begin to think myself that I have dwelt rather too long on this important subject, so I will wish you good-night, hoping that to-morrow may produce something better to entertain you with.

*Tuesday, July 9.*—Yesterday we had a piping hot morning, which made the culinary operations of the day appear rather formidable. Fortunately a storm came on, or rather a succession of storms, which, as they did not deter the guests from coming, suited us very well. These were Mr. Wallis, Mr. Jamieson, Mr

DRAWING FROM OTTOMAN SHORE

M'Laren, Mr. M'Call, and Mr. Tom Fortun. This last is a brother of the Mr. Fortun who married Miss Hamilton, since dead. He belonged to the military last winter, and being perfectly idle at present, he is living here, and will during the summer, I daresay, form a part of our regular *dramatis personæ*. The dinner served up to these illustrious personages was soup at the top, removed by (I am told) a very bad curry of my manufacture, boiled pork at the bottom, fried pork and ham at the two sides. Second course, pudding and tart. My biscuits, I presume, which appeared at dessert, were better than my curry; at any rate such ample justice was done to them that I am encouraged to give you the receipt—4 oz. of white sugar with as much water as will dissolve it, 4 oz. of clarified butter. This mixture to be poured hot upon 4 eggs, beating it up until a little cool. Throw in a few caraway seeds, and stir in as much flour as will make it into a *stiff* paste. Roll it and fold it as often as your patience will allow you. Bake it in cakes about the thickness of two half-crowns, which must be pricked. In the evening we had a card table. Miss Currer, Mr. Jamieson, Mr. M'Laren, and John sat down to it. The two young men entertained each other on the sofa, whilst Mr. Wallis, my mother, and I discussed various important and unimportant matters. Amongst the former were the flies in all their varieties, their attacks upon the human species, effects of the same, etc., etc., etc., as unailing, and a much more inexhaustible topic, than the weather at home. I have heard the subject discussed in a variety of ways, but Mr. Dunsford's observation was novel, "If anything could make me swear it would be the flies." This morning, after breakfast was concluded, John accompanied the whole party down in the scow to near Sturgeon point to

collect gravel for Mr. Wallis' improvements. I expect we shall see great changes at his place; he has been rough-casting the outside of his house. On their return John was dropped on a point of land, and scrambled home through the bush. Notwithstanding the storm of yesterday the weather has been very sultry. My school assembled in the afternoon, but we all felt the weather. I was sleepy, and the children were languid. I had a new scholar, a girl of ten or twelve years of age, not yet perfect in her letters. And now I think my number is up. When more come on I must turn some of the old ones off, unless I can introduce the mutual instruction system, or, as I cannot well extend my school hours, the benefit to each individual must be necessarily diminished by an increase of numbers. At present if the amount of good gained in a lesson is not very good, at any rate they are put into the way of learning, and rendered capable of improving themselves. I have one very neat worker, a little girl about eight years old, whom I can already trust to stitch John's shirt necks, and even give her any straight-forward piece of work to take home, which may be a convenience sometimes, whilst she is well pleased to earn a little matter.

*Wednesday, July 10.*—After the regular duties of the day were over, I set about the manufacture of a bonnet for my mother, almost my first attempt in this line, for I do not reckon anything of covering one. My only other was the one I made last year for myself of lining calico, the whole concern worth a shilling or eighteen-pence, but it looked so respectable that I wore little else the whole summer. In the evening I went down to see the launch of the *Ninniwish*. For the first time I was conscious of doing a thing for the sake of the journal, and I believe I exerted myself to put

away my millinery in time to meet the boat at the landing for the sake of having an incident to record. I need not have been in so great a hurry. I had time for a blow upon John's bugle whilst he finished his preparations, and, moreover, to see the boat weighed. The result was 128 lbs. After witnessing the launch, rather a different spectacle to that of the *Thunderer*, and seeing the *débutante* on her way to the Falls, I came up to bestow whiskey on the men, wherewith to drink success to the *Ninniwish*. The reflections on the lake were beautiful at sunset, and the lightning is now brilliant.

*Thursday, July 11.*—John returned late last night, accompanied by Mr. Tom Fortun. They were to have gone together to Bobcaygeon to-day, but the wind was so adverse that the voyage is postponed. Our breakfast-table was graced this morning with eighteen newspapers, and, what was much better, with five English letters, yours of the 11th June amongst them. As that part of the day not occupied by the perusal of these interesting despatches was dull enough, I shall devote a page to comment and reply. In the first place, do not send me out any portable musical instrument. There has been time and money enough spent already on me, and I will not have to charge myself with more waste of these valuable articles. The time may come when the first of these at least may be of less consequence than at present, and then I can make the experiment how much music there is left in my soul. Meanwhile at concerts there must be listeners, and I am content to be one. I am afraid I shall not be able to send an old shoe, I never have any. The article is in great request among the servants, and my remaining pair of well-fitting ones are too precious to part with. I am not, however, so

badly off in that department as I feared. Some of the boots and shoes I thought unwearable when my foot had been expanding in moccassins I can wear now. They tire me in the long-run but do not hurt, so I can wear them very well occasionally. Some I have disposed of, others altered to fit, so that the actual loss is not very great, and in case of failure this time I will try a new Store at Peterboro, where, I understand, they have nice shoes—rather dear, I daresay. We have just packed a basket of prog for the gentlemen tomorrow.

*Friday, July 12.*—A comfortless rainy morning, nevertheless the young men departed on their expedition. It has been so cold that I could have enjoyed a fire at most times of the day. The temperature is more agreeable this evening. I did not think there had been such un-summer-like summers in this country. We took advantage of being exclusively females at home to turn part of the house inside out, and what with preserving a few more strawberries and other female occupations, another day has passed over our heads. My mother is beginning a letter to you tonight. We thought we had heard of a servant a day or two ago, but it proves a disappointment. I do not like to see the summer slipping away and we remaining in this unsettled state.

*Saturday, July 13.*—John returned from his expedition in the evening, Mr. Fortun having proceeded to his quarters at the Falls. Nettle had been one of the party, and had scarcely been an hour at home when she pupped. The object of this journey was to bring up a boat belonging to Mr. F., which is to play a part at the Regatta. I take credit to myself for getting through twelve days' journal without once writing the word regatta, a sound which must vibrate on the air

of these lakes some hundred and fifty times a day. On Cameron's Lake it has been the topic for the last three months. We are only just getting drawn in, but they are new-fangled, having built boats this year for the purpose of taking an active part in it. The Regatta, together with the steamboat at the Falls standing still, and the ship-carpenters being unemployed, has led to the building of several new boats, and very much increased our navy. The merits, expectations, and adventures of the *Calypso*, the *Waterwitch*, the *Wave*, the *Coquette*, etc., etc., form interesting variations to the theme. I suppose I shall have to introduce you personally to all these ladies of the lakes, and to their respective crews in a more advanced stage of the affair. The business of this day has afforded nothing interesting, so I will take another portion of your letter to discuss, and as I have been in the millinery line, finishing my mother's bonnet, it shall be the fashions, and I will thank you, Margaret, for your information concerning them, and beg it may be renewed from time to time. It is highly satisfactory to feel one has been in the right way, and if it never happens to be the case, it matters very little. Thank you also for enabling me to attire myself in fashionable materials, and present also to Jane Birley my thanks for completing the costume, though I hope to thank her myself after the bag arrives, as I shall write by the next private opportunity, and one, I hope, will present itself in the Fall.

*Sunday, July 14.*—We had an exceedingly small congregation to-day, and it assembled very late. There is a difficulty in getting any regularity to an hour where there are no watches, or village clocks, or church bells. This I feel exceedingly in my school, but I believe it is an irremediable inconvenience. After church I



added a few lines to my mother's letter before John departed for the Falls, and after dinner took my book, but, alas! read very little. I do not often resist sleep on a Sunday afternoon, because experience has taught me that a very short nap saves me from a long struggle, and makes my reading infinitely more profitable. But to-day I took my book into quite too comfortable a position, and spent a very improper time in oblivion. I enjoyed a long connected dream all about you and yours. When I went to order tea I found Bridget in the same happy state from which I had recently roused myself, and had such a fellow-feeling for her that I set the kettle on in order not to wake her till it boiled. It is blowing rather cold to-night. How different from last year! The mosquitos, however, are always tolerably quiet in this chilly weather, which reconciles one to it. There must be something drowsy in the air too, cool as it is, for one of our congregation was so fast asleep when the sermon was ended that John had to go and rouse him after all the others had dispersed.

*Monday, July 15.*—I scarcely know what to tell you of to-day. Miss Currer has been as busy as possible superintending two little workmen she had engaged to do up her poultry yard, which has been somewhat a rubbishy place since the pig-styes, etc., were built. Besides this there was nothing much out of the usual course, except I jump at once to the last transaction of the day, which was very unusual, namely writing a note of invitation. We have at last asked the Dunsfords for Saturday, thinking it would be a convenience, at least to the elders of the family, to find themselves so much nearer church on Sunday morning. The gentleman who will do the duty is only a deacon, therefore Mr. Dunsford will be asked to assist in order that the

Sacrament may be administered. I should think he would not decline, but he has evinced little desire to make himself useful in his profession.

*Tuesday, July 16.*—John set out early this morning to take our note to the Dunsfords and bring up the *Ninniwish*, left half-way down the lake when Mr. Fortun's boat was brought up. He is not come back yet, why and wherefore, I suppose, we shall hear to-morrow, for I do not think he intended being so long away. My chief occupation was rigging myself up a morning gown out of one of my mother's, and making a collar to it out of superfluous sleeves. My mother handled the hoe instead of the needle, and was engaged for some time in trimming up her front garden. In the evening it was so calm that it was thought a favourable time for firing the log heaps running beneath the belt of young trees between us and the lake. We have always known that whenever this was done it would be at considerable risk to what we have considered one of our chief ornaments. I walked down before dark to where a score of piles were blazing, hoping that a more perfect acquaintance with their situations would tranquilize my fears. But I found it otherwise, and could not help regarding our favourite trees in great danger. About ten the fires were burning so splendidly that we all sallied forth for a nearer inspection of the scene. It would have been a fine one if divested of all idea of mischief, giving one some idea of what the furnace might be which slew the men who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into it. I expect my mother will dream of it, and I wish the master were at home, though his presence would not help to save the trees.

*Wednesday, July 17.*—John returned this morning. His experience had been put in request to advise con-

cerning the building of a boat, which had been partly the cause of his detention. He found Mr. Dunsford was gone to Toronto, therefore had not delivered our note, but we still purpose offering accommodation to some of the ladies. My mother was in her element to-day, tidying away the rubbish of the joiner's shop, the accumulation of ages. Miss Currer stuffed a pillow with feathers off the farm. The geese, however, were given up this year, they were so perpetually getting into the garden. I brought my gown to a conclusion, but am not at all satisfied with the performance. If, however, I have not succeeded in fashionizing the sleeves very gracefully, I have at least attained the object of the alteration, and got a neat little cape out of them. And now, before getting into bed, I will describe that operation to you.

In the first place I stand upon the bed, and with my handkerchief dash up and down about the hangings—this is to eject the house fly. Meanwhile my mother loosens the mosquito curtains, and at last drops them suddenly whilst I am continuing my operations. She then hands me the candle within, and I commence an inspection of the interior to see if any mosquitos may yet be lurking among the folds of our draperies. Notwithstanding all these precautions we not unfrequently find we have enclosed an enemy within the defences. The mosquitos are very numerous to-night. They vary exceedingly from day to day, and latterly we have had so few that we have grown careless about windows and doors. The trees we were so anxious about last night appear to have stood their roasting wonderfully.

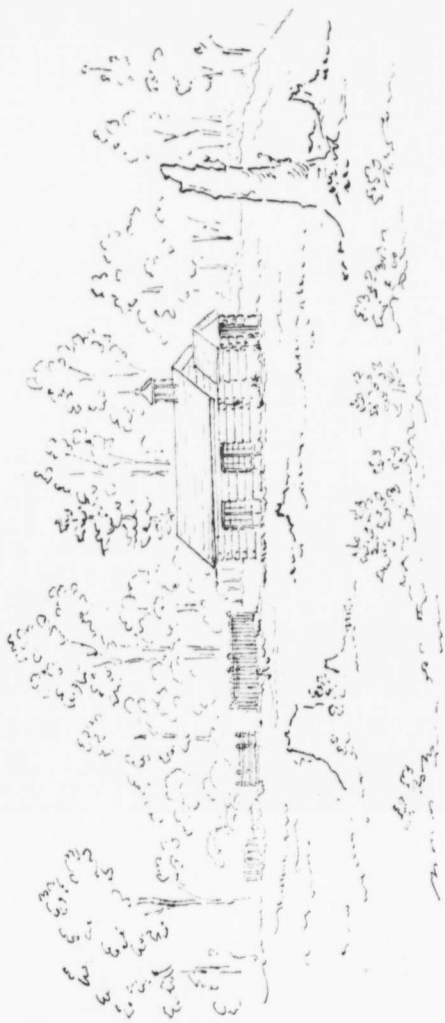
*Thursday, July 18.*—This morning, after sundry deliberations concerning the wind, and whether the southerly direction was likely to bring rain soon or not, it was determined that John and I should set out to

carry our invitation in person to the Dunsfords. Accordingly I embarked for the first time on board the *Ninniwish*, and a very nice little boat it is, but I rather prefer a canoe for an expedition of moderate length. I don't know how I should bear the kneeling position for three or four hours in a canoe. I can take a paddle and at least flatter myself that I do some little good, which is more agreeable than sitting in state at one end of the boat, and having nothing to do but observe my companion's exertions. My canoeing days are over. John does not like the responsibility of taking me out in one, and thinks it altogether an unfit conveyance for so helpless a being as woman. I, having a due value for my precious life, should be sorry to urge the risk of it, but I am rather glad the idea did not spring up earlier. After we turned Sturgeon point the wind was favourable. We put up a small sail, and proceeded more swiftly and easily on our voyage. It was the first time that I had been lower down than the Point since we came up—now almost two years ago. I think the lower part of the lake, upon the whole, superior to our end in point of beauty. Both shores are pretty, and the islands make an agreeable variety. Though at our end our own side is inferior to no part of the lake, the opposite coast is very monotonous. Mr. Dunsford's new house is a conspicuous object all the way down, and, I daresay, itself commands a fine view, but it will be two or three months more, I fancy, before they will be able to get into it. We found the ladies luxuriating in the absence of all domestics, a variety of not unfrequent enjoyment in the backwoods. Their servant had taken her departure early one morning before the family were up, and since that the young ladies were taking it in turn to bake bread, make puddings, etc., and perform

all the labours of the household. We can speak for the skill they have acquired in the first-named operation, for nicer bread was never laid on Canadian table than they placed before us, not even my own! After we had done justice to it, Mrs. Dunsford provided a further entertainment of harp and piano to enliven us during a thunderstorm. Our invitation was not accepted, which on some accounts I did not regret. We afterwards crossed the lake to Mr. Fraser's. He was absent, but we found his nice little wife at home, and gave them the invitation just declined by the Dunsfords, which was conditionally accepted. Here I saw, and smelled, the first roses since I came to Canada. Their little cottage is very pretty, with the wild vine and roses round the pillars of the verandah, and something more like a garden in front of it than can be elsewhere seen in these parts. We spent an hour or two very pleasantly with Mrs. Fraser. She is a very pleasing, unaffected person, and when we departed I wished she was nearer to us. Four hours' pulling against adverse wind brought us to our own landing just about sunset, and all the familiar objects about my home seemed to greet me with the same sort of old acquaintanceship as formerly after a long journey and an absence of weeks.

*Monday, July 22.*—I had just put the date of Friday when something, I presume, prevented my writing my journal, and behold! three days have elapsed without a line. I will not pretend to bring up the arrears very particularly. The transactions of Friday were, I believe, not worth bearing in mind. Saturday was partly spent in the usual avocations of that day, partly in preparing a nice little dinner for our invited guests, partly in wondering whether they would come or not, and in watching the weather to form an opinion on the

probabilities of the case. It was of a very doubtful kind, and we were not much surprised at having at last to sit down to our nice little dinner alone. We looked anxiously at the signs of the weather for the following day, and a fine one happily dawned upon us. About ten two boats-full put off from the landing, and wended their way up the river to Fenelon Falls, and as soon as there was an appearance of the congregation assembling, we walked slowly up the hill to our little church. After morning service, at which from about eighty to a hundred people might be present, nine children were brought to be baptized, one or two of them about six or seven years of age, and afterwards one grown woman, who had officiated as sponsor to one of the children, came forward herself to be baptized. Being quite unable to answer the questions the clergyman put to her, he declined admitting her into the church at this time! Does not this show how much we stand in need of a regular minister amongst us? When this ceremony was over the time before evening service was so short that some of us preferred remaining in church to encountering another walk, and the gentlemen were so good as to bring up some sandwiches and a pail of water, which, with a little wine, was, I assure you, extremely refreshing, for we have now hot summer weather. Mr. Street, who was very quiet and unaffected both in and out of the pulpit, and, moreover, pronounced by some of us to be very like you, William, gave us an excellent short sermon in the afternoon, and about five we re-embarked on our homeward course. What an event in our lives! and once we went to church every Sunday. Mr. and Mrs. Fraser had not come to us the day before on account of the unseaworthy state of their boat, but Mr. Wallis knowing of it, which we did not, had sent his on Sunday morning for them. We hoped



FENSILOS FALLS CHURCH.

to bring them back with us, but Mrs. Hamilton asked them to Glenara, and their great distance from it when at home led them to avail themselves of this opportunity of visiting her, and gave us promise of a visit hereafter. They were to have called on going down to-day, but I think the thunderstorm we have had will either prevent their journey altogether, or at least have delayed their starting till very late. Mrs. Hamilton is going down to Peterboro on Wednesday she says, to scold her daughter for going out to parties and coming home at one or two in the morning, when the doctor has ordered her never to be out after sunset. Aunt Alice, who has often talked of a journey to Peterboro, though it was not clear whether in joke or in earnest, at length seriously determined to accompany Mrs. Hamilton, whose stay will only be a few days. Maggie meanwhile is to be left with us. This was all settled yesterday, and now we must try to make out a long list of commissions, for she will be rather lost in the great town without plenty to do. I believe she goes with an idea that she shall be able to get whatever she wants, in which I suspect she will be greatly mistaken. For my part, now that we have such a capital shopper to employ, I can scarcely think of a thing I do want. I do not know how it might be if I should at this moment find myself walking up Bold Street or round St. Ann's Square. We certainly have no exercise for self-denial of this nature here. I remember telling you of the loss of Juno, my favourite amongst the dogs. She was brought back to us to-day after a six months' absence, during which time I fancy she has been living amongst the Indians. One of them brought her to her rightful owner at last, but it will take a week or two of Miss Curren's good feeding to make her like herself. John is at this moment writing out music for his bugle. He improves decidedly.



He was highly delighted the other day at having discovered and stopped a leak in the instrument, which greatly facilitates the sounding of it. We must get you to send us the notes of some good simple old psalm tunes. There is a book of such amongst my old music. I believe I oftener think of my music books than of my piano. Some dim recollection of an old favourite passes through my mind's ear, and I fancy I could like to see the notes. The psalm tunes, I hope, will be wanted soon for the church. Yesterday our carpenter was the leader, and several voices were joined to his. These, I hope, will increase in number and in power as we get accustomed to hear ourselves.

The church looks uncommonly neat now when it is finished, and would easily hold double the number that were assembled in it. Mr. Wade talks of coming up again, but he is much engaged, and his promise to do so has been made a long time. I do not know whether we told you that our friend Mr. Atthill has now a church in the lower Province—Three Rivers.

*Tuesday, July 23.*—Miss Curren's courage has been cooling gradually all to-day respecting this Peterboro journey, at which I am not surprised, for the weather has been growing hotter and hotter. Finally, I think it is quite given up. Perhaps it is as well so, though with Mrs. Hamilton I should have regarded her as quite safe. In the afternoon I received the agreeable announcement that a young woman was come to take our place. She had brought her bundle as usual ready to establish herself, without the smallest doubt of being engaged. I was going to put a few questions to her, but seeing her very much heated I said she had better get her tea before we talked to her. Going out a few minutes afterwards, I found her with her hands in the

wash-tub hard at work already. This looks well, and put a stop to all enquiries concerning qualifications, leaving only the simple one about wages to be made. How differently our domestic arrangements are formed here and in England! It is not a small thing towards the balance of things that we have no "characters" to give and enquire.

*Sunday, July 28.*—I have written no journal these several days. The fact is I am out of love with it. Either the month or I have been immensely stupid, and I begin to think the plan of making the day's transactions the subject of the evening's writing not a good one. However, as I have proceeded thus far in it, I will complete the month, without altogether breaking the thread of my narrative. On Wednesday, notwithstanding most indifferent weather, Mrs. Hamilton went down (to Peterboro), and left us our young visitor, who enlivens us not a little, following us about just like a little dog. To keep her quiet I set her upon a piece of worsted work, which had in some measure the desired effect, but also that of rousing her at four o'clock in the morning. This will not last. I find myself sometimes on the point of saying "your grandmama" in speaking of my mother to her. I can fancy Alice just such another, for the child, though a year or two older, is very small and juvenile. Dear little Alice! she has found out by this time that Canada is more than a two days' journey from Seedley. There are thoughts I must put away from me at times. We had a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Fraser on Friday. They arrived just in time to partake of our early dinner. Mrs. Fraser appeared very shy when they were with us for the Regatta last autumn, and no wonder after a five years' entire seclusion. Her winter at Peterboro, and a further acquaintance here, has quite removed the shyness, or at least only left

what with her foreign accent and nice appearance makes her a very interesting little person. We hope to see them again at the Regatta. Mr. Fraser is very gentlemanly, and after seeing nothing but young men for so long, it is quite a treat to converse with a middle-aged one. We want decidedly an admixture of ages, as well as of sexes, to render our society what it should be. The pursuits and occupations, too, of all its members are too similar to afford much variety in the general run of conversation, and this defect I expect to be on the increase, as the varieties of our several younger years belong more and more to a remote past. Still it is curious to see a little knot of such as we are, separated by so many miles of wilderness from the rest of the world, for we certainly present a fair average specimen of what society in our own station is at home. We lack, however, that occasional contact with spirits of a superior order which is more or less enjoyed by all there, and though to be in company for an hour or two with the wise and learned may neither enlarge one's understanding nor extend one's science, still it keeps up our veneration for great acquirements, and stimulates the appetite for knowledge, whilst here we are in danger of forgetting that such things are. I had a letter from Miss Lowe this week, and this is somewhat of an event, as she is a bad correspondent, but I find where friends have not the opportunity of hearing authentic information concerning us through you, direct communication should be more frequent. It is quite amusing to hear of the strange second-hand accounts Miss Lowe has received of us. I wonder how people can be at the trouble of such inventions. I have never seen a humming-bird yet, though they are not uncommon. But I believe unless your attention has been called by the sound you are scarcely likely to observe

so tiny a creature. I fancy after four days' trial I may be expected to mention my hopes and my fears respecting our new domestic. I am sorry to say the latter greatly predominate. The only source of the former is that she is young and willing, but the height of her ambition seems to extend to acting by dictation. I must keep out of the way entirely in order to put her upon thinking, instead of asking, "Shall I set the potatoes on now?" "Do you think there is fire enough on the bake kettle?" So far she has been small relief, and I am somewhat down-hearted on the subject. Possibly she may be less lost and bewildered in a little time. This is the peculiar and unavoidable trial of the backwoods, and it colours the stream and directs the current of all one's ideas, and makes us very dull and stupid journal writers. We had a visit from Mr. M'Laren and Mr. Dundas this afternoon.

*Saturday, August 3.*—Twice a week is quite sufficient for the record of such an uneventful life as ours, but I have let nearly a whole one elapse without writing, and now the month is out and the post-day at hand, so I must bring my fourth volume to a conclusion. We are once more in the midst of dirt and confusion, and surrounded by work-people.

Happily, however, they are outside the house this time. We came to the decision of plastering the whole house, on account of the absolute necessity of doing something of that kind to the gable-ends to keep the cold out. We shall be much the better for this operation when it is over, but meanwhile the state of affairs is not the most comfortable, and the disagreeables attending it are on the increase. John was obliged to go down to Peterboro to provide nails and some other things for our proceedings.

He set out at three o'clock in the morning on

Tuesday, and breakfasted at home on Friday morning, on which day also Mrs. Hamilton returned and took our young visitor away again. She leaves Maxwell at Peterboro until the Regatta, and talks of her spending the winter there again. What will Mr. Dennistoun say to this arrangement?

Mrs. Hamilton had bad weather both going and coming—wet going down, cold coming up—so it was very well Aunt Alice had not joined her party. Moreover, Peterboro cannot at present supply the article she chiefly wanted, viz. crockery. Things will break here as elsewhere, and we want replenishing sadly. You have no idea of the extra value which glass, china, etc., acquire by removal to the wilderness. As for our candle lamp, it has become a perfect treasure, and we have as much care over it as if it were Aladdin's own. We must, I think, be ordering another box of candles for it, which I should think had better make the winter than the summer journey, and if our parcel of seeds is not sent off it might accompany the box.

As this is not a letter, but a journal, I must give you something of the doings of the week. In the early part of it we were preserving ourselves a good supply of raspberries. It is a fruit we have in plenty, and much cheaper than in England. At the same time we looked over our year's stock of sweetmeats, and I am happy to say found them, notwithstanding the extremes of heat and cold they have experienced, in very good order. This was a delightful occupation to Maggie, but it spoilt one or two dinners. Pickling has also been the order of the day. We consume more in the way of ketchups, sauces, curry-powder, etc., than we used to do at home, on account of the many months we are without fresh meat. The latter part of the week I was making the discovery that

I am no mantua-maker when out of the beaten track. I perplexed myself a little in the manufacture of the black and white print you sent me out, but now when it is complete the performance is approved. It has, however, put it into my mind to ask you to send me occasionally, when there are changes, a bit of calico correctly shaped and properly plaited up into a sleeve. This is generally the most difficult and important part. It will prevent me from having to work *à tâtons*, as on this occasion. One of the doings of next week ought to be candle-making, at which I feel more *au fait*. As for domestic matters, I may tell you that suspense is over. The new girl will not do. I never, I think, saw one so thoroughly useless. She is inconceivable and undescribable. We continue, however, to like Bridget, and therefore must consider ourselves comparatively well off. Mrs. Hamilton cannot hear of a servant. She has only a temporary one, whose child she has also to accommodate. Mrs. Fortye was without one, the Dunsfords are without—all very encouraging! I hope we may succeed before the Regatta. I suppose Mary must again be our friend in need.

Mr. Boyd and Mr. Hamilton are dining here to-day with John as acting officers of the club, making preliminary arrangements for the great affair. Their deliberations appear to have provided me with a little more work, for the club is to give a flag for one of the prizes, which I am to design, if not in part to execute. You will be surprised to hear not a word of the bazaar. It is dormant at present, but not given up. In fact it was found impossible to accomplish anything for it during the summer months, but some of our winter evenings are to be devoted to it. I am sure the establishment of a school is an object worthy of our best exertions. Aunt Alice said in a very melan-

choly tone the other day, "I did think and say when we were coming out to Canada, 'Well, there is one good thing in it, however, there will be no bazaars!'" Poor Miss Curren! she finds us much further advanced in folly than she expected. We have not only bazaars, but regattas! By the bye, there was a bazaar in Canada the other day, at Kingston, which produced the large sum of £40. I must not forget to tell you that the box which I announced to you in my first page, and which you may imagine half over the Atlantic by this time, is yet at Bobcaygeon, and very likely will now have to wait until late in the autumn for conveyance to England. We have had a few days of chilly weather again, though not absolutely reduced to fires. Of such changes we had none last summer. I feel very brave about winter cold again now that the house will be plastered. I expect this to make an immense difference. My mother thinks she prefers winter to summer, a taste in which I am sure I shall never agree.

*Sunday, August 4.*—I will wish you, my dear Margaret, by anticipation an ever joyful return of to-morrow. It will be your birthday, and I welcome you to the top of the hill. John's toast to me on the 24th of June was, "an easy descent down the hill."

I do not know how it is with you, but I begin to have many ancient feelings, and have found myself meditating upon caps sometimes. No wonder I should feel old when I find several considerably my juniors always reckoning themselves amongst the seniors of the community. It will also to-morrow be the anniversary of our reunion with John. How little we thought then of the trouble that was so near at hand! My dear father was looking so well and so happy at that time. I can yet often scarcely realise the truth

that the beloved parent is no more, and, looking round on the incomplete family circle, would feel that a member of it was absent. May my thoughts be oftener on that blessed land where that absent member is now gone to, and may the scattered family at length be there all reunited.

Nothing is as yet decided about the clergyman that is to have our church, but Mr. Wade is coming up this month. There has been another great fire in Peterboro—Mr. Shaw's distillery and saw-mill, uninsured. The rebuilding was commenced within a very few days, and all the backwoodsmen are going down next week to a raising "Bee." If you have not sent off the seeds will you enclose in the box a piece of coarse bobbin net for mosquito blinds? It answers better than any other material, being more transparent, and does not incline to split like muslin; but nothing lasts very well that is perpetually basking in the sun. We dare not attempt to wash them at all. At this moment one of the creatures comes as if to revenge itself for my plotting the exclusion of its race! Next to the biters our greatest insect pests are crickets. They are everywhere, and in such numbers that it is quite hopeless to attempt destroying them. Moreover, they are very destructive. I find they have been feasting lately on my shoe leather. The noise of them at night is unceasing, but this we get quite accustomed to. There is a little beetle too, a great plague from its numbers, and a large kind of ant annoyed us a good deal last year in the sweetmeat cupboard. Beyond this we have nothing to complain of in this way. There are very few of the disgusting kinds which hot climates sometimes produce. I believe we omitted in our last to notify John's acceptance of the trust you repose in him. I am afraid you will not allow him to adopt his



god-child, and make Katharine Elizabeth heiress of Blythe.

BLYTHE, December 1, 1839.

This is the day on which I had fixed with myself to begin one of my closely-written sheets to you, as you have been pleased to express yourselves interested with my former ones. I do not feel now that I have to enlighten you respecting our mode of life in these parts, for I think, as John used to say to us, you must know the backwoods as well as I do—not perhaps exactly so, but at least as well as you ever will until you see them. I scarcely feel a doubt that if life and health are prolonged one of you will see them at some future, though perhaps distant, day, but the other is of a less locomotive spirit, and I fear will never be seen on this side the Atlantic. However, she may perhaps spare a daughter as your travelling companion. I could fancy Alice opening her eyes very wide at a few things. But you do not approve of castle-building, so I forbear, and return to matters of fact. December finds us enjoying very lovely weather. It has been mild and sunny some days, but if tempted out by the external brightness, one finds one's expectations of a pleasant walk far from realised. This Fall has been very different from the last. We have had very few days of severe weather as yet. I know we mentioned the Indian summer in our last, but I am sure we did not half enough expatiate on the beauties of it. It prevailed during the greatest part of October, and very frequently until the last of the month we were entirely without fire, even at night. The lake has been frozen over about a week, at least our part of it. The ice came just one day too soon. We made an effort to get our packages up before the waters closed. John had two days'

journeying in miserable weather to make the necessary arrangements. We had many changes of hopes and fears with the frosts and thaws during the period which must elapse before they would reach us. At length a beautiful thaw came, continuing a whole week, until the very day when we thought they might arrive. In fact they did come down the Scugog River, almost to the lake, when the ice became too strong, and they were taken back to Purdy's, there to lie a month or so until sleighing time. We bear it with great philosophy, reconciling ourselves with the idea that the pleasures of anticipation are prolonged. I sometimes think patience is much strengthened by the exercise it meets with in this country, but perhaps it is only that our ideas of time alter with the circumstances of our case. A month here is hardly as much as a week at home. At any rate John, who is a four years older settler than we are, does not give us much credit for our acquisition of the virtue in question. Let Margaret fancy herself with a sick child, waiting until you had gone five and twenty miles and back for a dose of physic for it. We had a man from that distance on such an errand the other day. John has been despatching a letter to you to-day. I do not know whether he has enlarged on the proceedings of the month that has elapsed since we last wrote, but I imagine that his matter will have been of more importance than the gossip of the day, so I shall not hesitate to give you a little of the past as well as of the present.

*Tuesday, December 3.*—I did not take up my pen last night—for why? John and I were deep in the Prophecies, to which some circumstances had called our attention, so you will not be surprised that we found enough to puzzle us till bed-time. There was nothing remarkable in the events of the day. I had my school,

but at present it consists only of my two eldest children. I do not regret it, as these get a start from receiving more of my attention, whilst those I hope will not forget much who are at present kept away by bad roads and want of shoes. Schooling has been very light work for some time. First the harvest came, during which I had a very small attendance. Then the Regatta, which was a holiday. Afterwards potato-raising interfered a good deal, and now the roads. One or two of my greatest dunces are staying away too at present in the hope that another year may find them brighter and more painstaking. This is a most brilliant day. John has gone over to the Falls, whence we hope he will bring us some letters, and perhaps the Major too, to partake of a fat goose and taste our home-made Stilton cheese. We have cut into one of our summer performances, and it is pronounced a very successful one. I have been ironing a gown this morning, an accomplishment I have not yet perfectly attained, owing to the colour of our attire since we came; but though not yet quite at home in the operation, the result is very superior to what issues from the hands of our washerwoman. Our neighbours the Dunsfords have been living without a servant most of the summer, and the ladies have done all their own washing. They gain great credit for their exertions, and are themselves not a little pleased with them. I take it that an English lady transported here is ordinarily a more useful character than a Canadian-bred one. This I gather from what I hear, for of course I know nothing of it myself. Our clergyman's wife is a Canadian, however, so I shall at least know one specimen. Mr. Fidler, for that is the beautiful name of our pastor, I have just seen once. He has performed service in the church two Sundays, but unfortunately just when there

was neither a lake nor a road for ladies to travel on. He rode over here, however, one morning, accompanied by Mr. Wallis. He is tall, thin, middle-aged, and gentlemanly. At present he is gone down to bring up his family. They have part of the tavern given up to them until a house is built, which will be set about as soon as possible. There is another arrival at the Falls. The father and mother-in-law of Mr. Jamieson are come to live in the house he vacates. What changes! Until the autumn of our arrival Mrs. Fraser had been the only lady in the settlement. Now there will be Mrs. Dennistoun, Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Fidler, Mrs. Hoare, ourselves, and all the Dunsfords in addition. There is another great alteration too. At one time Mr. Need and John were the only Englishmen among a considerable majority of Scotch and Irish. Now the Englishmen on the two lakes are eleven in number to five Scotchmen and four Irishmen. At all these arrivals of ladies I do not think I rejoice, as it would seem natural to do. I shall have to pay morning visits, etc., and I suppose I am growing savage, *alias* selfish, and unaccustomed to make sacrifices to society. I am glad there are children of Mr. Fidler's family, for though they may be no immediate acquisition, it will be pleasant to see something growing up amongst us. My mother must wait until the waters open again before she can pay her respects to the new-comers. I do not think she could bear a sleigh. I used to think Aunt Alice would be able to undertake a drive to the Falls when the roads were pretty good, but she is not as stout as she was this time last year.

*Wednesday, December 4.*—John came back yesterday, but no letters and no Major. His business at the Falls regarded the parsonage, and he imagined he had left things pretty well settled, but Mr. Jameson came

over for him again this morning. A new idea had been started which had to be discussed. These journeys are not very improving to a bad cold John has got, but I daresay until the erection is completed he will often be wanted at the scene of action. He was accompanied home to-day by Mr. M'Laren. What do you think I have been doing this evening? Taking a hand in a "rubber." I did so, I believe, that it might be apparent my ignorance is real, and not feigned for the purpose of excusing me from making myself useful on other occasions. The Major is fond of a "rubber," but among us of the upper end he is not often indulged, Aunt Alice and John being, I think, the only other whist-players—the lower-endians are rather more in that line. The weather is still magnificent. You have nothing like it in England.

*Sunday, December 8.*—This sheet disclaims all pretensions to be a journal. Three days have passed without an entry in it. You have lost nothing except some beautiful weather, which I sincerely wish you had been here to enjoy. Now we have a complete thaw, and the whole atmosphere smells as if the country had got the dry-rot. Notwithstanding the state of the roads, our congregation, which again assembles during Mr. Fidler's absence, was an excellent one. We numbered twenty-one. John being away, I was parson, and took my text from Romans ch. xiv. v. 16. Whilst rejoicing in the advantages of a regular clergyman and place of public worship, I feel some regret that this little assembly of neighbours must cease. Some of our party will certainly not be able to get to church during the winter months, and even I, who have been somewhat too tenderly bred for a backwoods-woman, shall be a little dependent on weather. When once sleighing begins there is less to interfere with

moving to and fro than in the summer season, when wind and water are the creatures we have to deal with. This evening we have been living in by-gone days, reading over some of my mother's and aunt's voluminous correspondence, which year by year is committed to the flames after a re-perusal. We are just getting to a period within my own recollection. It is curious to look back from new Blythe to old Blythe, and think of the blanket-coated Canadian farmer in his white frock. I wonder how *our* letters will read when Alice and her sisters are reaching middle age, and we, or the few of us who may be left, are reviewing some of the earlier variations of our existence. A great majority of the *dramatis personæ* of my mothers' letters are no longer moving at all upon the scene now. It reminded me rather of a little poem I vaguely remember, which, after describing some scenes of everyday life, when you are expecting some moral to be deduced, terminates abruptly with, "This was a hundred years ago"—a very intelligible moral. Looking back is very apt to make one look forward too, and if a little awe arises from the obscurity of the prospect, it is very comforting to know that amidst all the changes and chances of this, our mortal life, there is one who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

*Tuesday, December 10.*—John came home yesterday reporting that the house for our clergyman is begun. It is to look on to Camerons Lake, will be close to Mr. Wallis', very near to the village, but almost half a mile from the church. We are all mustering our forces to provide a comfortable dwelling for our pastor. The labouring classes give work, and the moneyed settlers cash. You will hear more on this interesting subject of our plans and means before I have done. We hear Mr. Dennistoun's marriage is fixed for the

24th inst. We are likely to have early intelligence how the wedding goes off, as the groomsmen intend to be back for our Christmas Day dinner. I look upon the transactions of the neighbourhood which concern me not, still with something more of interest than in the ordinary ones of any other neighbourhood I ever lived in. I never felt before that I was in the least likely to be permanently settled. Now, though I cannot estimate the probabilities of the case, I think it is very possible I may live and die where I am, and the thought sometimes crosses my mind in looking round on the younger part of the population, will there be anybody to care for the old woman at Blythe? If I would have it so, I must not encourage the half-savage, half-selfish feelings I confessed to on another page. Again, when I contemplate the other possibility of my some time bidding farewell to the new world, I feel inclined to confine my interest within the smallest possible compass. It is a great deal wiser to think of the present than of the future, and sometimes perhaps a very little bit of the past is allowable.

John is gone to-day to blaze<sup>1</sup> a road through the forest to Mr. Boyd's. It shortens the distance there by half, and brings all that part of the lake about five miles nearer to us. My mother is very busy at present preparing some red cloaks wherewith she intends to make all my school girls happy this Christmas. They will look most snug and comfortable. Good warm clothing is very dear in this country, and not easily attainable by the poor settlers. Yet notwithstanding this, I believe there is much more suffering from cold in England than here. The forest is always at hand, and those who have only one room can have little difficulty in keeping it warm, though where they are

<sup>1</sup> Mark trees to be felled.

multiplied by the necessities of civilisation, it is not only extremely expensive, but a great inconvenience to have to perpetually consider your stock of firewood, and almost impossible, as other things have to be attended to, ever to get sufficiently beforehand to feel at rest on the subject for any length of time. And so we have, as is quite right, to pay the price of our comforts and refinements.

*Thursday, December 12.*—John was only just in time with his "blazing," as a thick snow began to fall yesterday, and made us feel for a time somewhat anxious, as it was getting very dark before John made his appearance at home. It is so easy and so dangerous to stray in the forest, especially from a new untrodden road. We had the horn sounded, which he heard to a considerable distance, though I believe he was coming safe enough without such a guide. This snow falls upon very weak ice, and I am afraid lake travelling will be very bad, to the annoyance of many. Our goods may have to lie at Purdy's even longer than was expected, and, which is almost as important, Mr. Dennistoun's wedding may be delayed. We have been told that at the time the first snow fell a Captain something and another gentleman were making their way from Toronto to this place. As we have no idea who our intended guests may be, there is something for us to build a castle upon by way of amusement until the roads open. One of our occupations to-day was bottling some wine. We got into a dilemma owing to the badness of the tap, and were obliged to summon John to our assistance. He says the taps to be had in this country are very bad, as is the case with most things, and having more than once experienced inconvenience in consequence, the present circumstances suggest to me that it might be well to have three or four from England—



so there is another commission for you. My more elegant occupation this evening has been commencing a little footstool as a wedding present to Mrs. Dennistoun. It will be no great piece of work, being only a border with a cloth top. I think it will be pretty, though I had small scope for my imagination in planning it, wools being at the lowest ebb. After this the residue will accomplish little more than a kettle holder, always excepting the materials for the chair.<sup>1</sup> I think I shall have to alter the date William put in his sketch of the "Arms" from '42 to '52. I must not think of looking at it until the bazaar is off my hands. I have been doing a few drawings for it lately. They are all duplicates of what you already possess, so John's performances will be more likely to tempt you to become a purchaser, and they will certainly be more generally attractive. Mr. Wallis has set his sister to work, and I know she can work, for I have an uncommonly pretty pair of slippers sent me by her in acknowledgment of a drawing of her brother's house.

*Friday, December 13.*—Nothing remarkable to-day excepting that we hung our first bacon, six hams now in pickle will soon decorate our kitchen. It is John's ambition to see it adorned by twenty fitches and twenty hams, but the pig department is not very flourishing at present, as we are killing off an indifferent breed, and only just expecting the first family of a superior one. I say we, speaking generally, but there is not distinct ownership amongst them.

*Saturday, December 14.*—I woke this morning in a terrible fright thinking I had got a cold. If anybody

<sup>1</sup> *N.B.*—The "chair" often mentioned consisted of two pieces of tapestry work, one the Langton coat-of-arms, for the seat, the other a fancy sketch—two girls, one holding a basket of roses, in a frame, with wreaths of flowers round.

knew how much afraid I am of a cold they would think me very soft indeed. On this occasion I half choked myself with flannel and fur in hopes of smothering the enemy in this early stage, and I am very much inclined to hope the remedy has proved effectual. Whilst keeping close to-day I have got on beautifully with my footstool, which will be ready for making up as soon as I can get sight of our carpenter, whom we expect in a day or two on his way to Mr. Wallis. We have been so accustomed to have a carpenter about us that I do not know how we shall do without one when we are once fairly finished off. We have a great addition to the premises lately in the shape of a wood-shed. The cattle have also had a new building bestowed upon them this fall, which, until you get a new sketch of the farm, you must remember is situated about half-way between the stable and barn.

*Wednesday, December 18.*—Sunday and Monday were perfectly uneventful. Yesterday brought us a little more variety, first in the shape of a note from Mr. Dennistoun, requesting John's attendance on the 24th, so the important subject of the wardrobe had to be discussed, and the ways and means of travelling, etc. As regards the first of these subjects of consideration, a certain brown coat which appeared at Margaret Earle's wedding, and at your own, is to come forth once more on the present occasion, and the other points of the equipment were satisfactorily arranged. But travelling, unless the roads greatly improve in the next week, will present many difficulties and inconveniences. There is but little snow, and no ice that can be trusted. In all probability the bride and bridegroom, who intend going to Toronto before they return, will have to perform part of their expedition in a waggon. A romantic excursion truly! and one would

think very little fit for a delicate person to undertake. John is very sorry that his presence was asked for, and everybody thinks a most inconvenient season has been fixed upon.

In the evening Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Alexander Dennistoun arrived before tea, and spent the evening with us. The envious young bachelors, who had no wedding prospects, were very much inclined to laugh at the happy man who has. They quizzed his great and active preparations for the event! It appears that he has as yet got scarcely anything into the house, and with these roads, Mrs. Hamilton must be quite cut off from rendering assistance in making things a little ready. The bride will find plenty of occupation and amusement when she comes herself in making all comfortable. Another subject of mirth was that there has been no wedding ring provided. Peterboro cannot furnish one, and they think one will have to be borrowed. We shall hear all particulars in course of time, but our Christmas dinner is not to take place until the 29th this year, to accommodate the travellers. The weather is something colder, and we might call it cold if we did not know that the thermometer has some 30 or 40 degrees to fall yet. We have sent our boy to the Falls this morning in hopes that there may be some letters for us. It is, I think, seven weeks since we had one from you.

Again this year, within two months after the regatta, one of the visitors at it has been called hence. Not this time a much-admired young lady, but a middle-aged man, and yet perhaps he as little looked for so early a summons to another world. The post arrived with a letter from you as I had finished the last line, and put a stop to the reflections that might have ensued. But it has not changed the current of thought,

for amongst all the satisfactory intelligence we have from you, the one melancholy circumstance we are informed of dwells at present the most in my mind. Poor Ellen!<sup>1</sup> she has had a life of many sufferings, and both she and the friends that loved her have had a long preparation for the last event. Charlotte will feel as if she had lost a child. I hope we shall soon hear from her. She has entered very much into the details of poor Ellen's state both of mind and body, and we have rejoiced to find that amongst all the sufferings of the one, the other remained in a happy state, or rather was in a much more happy state than at any former time. When I think of these things I wish we were all safely housed in the eternal mansions. I am rather surprised that in the middle of November you had not received our box by Mr. Kirkpatrick. He was to sail by steam from New York on either the 16th or the 18th of October, and therefore should have landed early in November. I shall look with some anxiety about it for another letter from you, for though the contents were not of any value, they were rather precious in our own eyes, as all we had to send, and would be, I doubt not, in yours also. I find your opinion respecting our regatta coincides with some of the wiser heads here. The number of wise ones, too, seems very much increasing, so I expect you will hear of no more regattas. I believe the backwoodsmen were very glad of an occasion to ask their friends up here, and make some return for the civilities they receive at Peterboro, and for once or twice I have no doubt pleasure was afforded, but it would be too much to expect them to visit the back lakes again and again. It has been quite a "letter" day. John has had one

<sup>1</sup> *N.B.*—Ellen Briggs, daughter of my grandmother's eldest sister. Charlotte, her sister, married Mr. Christopher Rawdon.

from Mr. M'Andrew and one from Mr. Atthill. The latter announces his intention of visiting these parts before long. He may perhaps make one of our Christmas party.

*Thursday, December 19.*—This having been school day I will make it the occasion of thanking you for the little book you have for me. I have no doubt that were you, or your friend Dr. Kay, to visit my school you would find great occasion to reform it. I go on in a hum-drum old-fashioned way, teaching just reading and writing, and very little else. But do not imagine from this that I am a despiser of modern improvements; on the contrary, I shall be exceedingly glad to see some accounts of them, and if possible benefit a little by the hints I shall receive. Moreover, I am quite sensible that the instruction I give goes a very small way indeed towards complete education, and I have felt a misgiving lest, in some cases, the fact of a child being sent to me for two or three hours twice a week affords an excuse for neglecting it at home. I endeavour to impress it upon their friends that I by no means charge myself with the whole education, but am willing to give a little assistance as it may be in my power. In one case, where they are very competent to teach at home, I very much question whether my assistance has not been worse than useless on this account. One individual has actually made it an excuse for not doing anything towards a school-house, that he could send his child to me. In other cases, however, I must do some good, though the amount of it may be small. In one neither the father nor mother can either read or write, though evidently in many respects quite better sort of people, and their children show more complete cleanliness and propriety than any other. In another case they are a very large

and busy family, and have evidently made some small effort towards instruction themselves, though they complain that the children lose in the summer what they can teach them during the winter months. They evidently value instruction, and rarely have kept their daughter at home, though she is at a very useful age. I have only to complain in one instance that the benefit afforded is not appreciated, at least a very irregular attendance is obtained. But I should not talk of appreciating the benefit when I was just going to tell you how small after all it was. Most of my scholars have had to begin from a-b-c, and until a little reading is accomplished I scarcely think, with my limited days and hours, I can attempt anything beyond it. Writing I began with the elder ones, merely by way of occupying profitably the time that the others were saying their lessons, but to very little profit did they use the pen until latterly, when from a smaller number I have been able to give more direct attention to it, and decided improvement begins to appear. With my readers I am at present pleased enough if they appear to take in the direct meaning of the words as they read them, without entering into any explanations or questionings that may help to open their understandings. I do not know what progress can be expected from children who say a lesson twice a week, and perhaps never look at a book at any other time.

*Sunday, December 22.*—Friday and Saturday were rather busy days, the extra work that made them so was fitting John out for his expedition, not exactly for the wedding, though my mother ironed his shirt for the morning, and wished she were beautifying him for his own wedding. We were also providing for his comfort during the journey, knitting gaiters to keep the snow out of his moccassins. With these roads he may expect

to have to jump out of the sleigh some twenty times, and I hope our performance will prove useful.

All sorts of defences against the weather are of great importance here. My mother accuses me of not wrapping up. What do *you* think? At the present moment I am wearing two pairs of stockings, a pair of socks, a pair of shoes, and a pair of moccasins. True, I do not take the same care of the upper extremity. I am often puzzled about a little covering for it, as I have sundry reasons for avoiding caps as long as I can, and I am not very fond of disfiguring myself altogether. Strange to say, vanity can exist in the backwoods, and it survives middle-age. Now, too, that there will be a bride amongst us, we must look forward to some gaities, rather different, to be sure, from those you have had in honour of Mr. Escher.

A large dinner party is not among my most agreeable reminiscences of the old world, and yet I should like very well to see some of the long tables that will be spread on Wednesday next. We, as it happens, shall be quite alone. John did not half like our being so squandered about on Christmas day. We had several groans from him in contemplating this journey with bad roads, an old sleigh, and a new horse, and Mrs. Hamilton to bring up again, so that he cannot make the journey a useful one by getting up a load. He may, perhaps, be able to bring back with him some things we have lying at Peterboro, which appear to have arrived from England in July, and to have been then announced to us in a letter which has miscarried.

A second announcement of them reached us only just as the lakes were closing. We imagine these things to be the moreen for Aunt Alice, and a filter, supposed to have been lost. We are going to lose one of our neighbours in consequence of his wife not being

satisfied with solitude. John's comment on the matter is that a man runs a great risk when he marries in this country. I think it is one thing that keeps our backwoodsmen so long unmarried. The risk is by no means obviated by taking a wife of the daughters of the land. Indeed, those who have been accustomed to the semi-civilisation of the more settled districts have a much greater horror of forest seclusion than such as have really lived in the world. I think the nuptials at present proceeding have brought the old topic more into my mind. I believe John begins to give himself up, so we may jog down the hill together, sympathising with each other on our forlorn condition. We hear to-day that Mr. Fidler has again reached the Falls, accompanied by his family. I hope after John's return I may soon have an opportunity of paying my respects to the lady, but I am afraid my mother will be very fearful of me this winter, though my symptoms of cold have entirely disappeared. I believe I am quite as much afraid for myself, though I do not look for safety from precisely the same cause. The time may come when I shall not be worth a straw to anybody. It will be a great change, and one of which I cannot estimate the effect on me. As I sat at my knitting yesterday, a great many things came into my head that I thought I should say when I resumed the pen, but they appear to have escaped me. One circumstance has occurred to-day which I have no pleasure in recording. Our servant has given notice of her intention to return home. It is the same one that we have had since May last. I had got accustomed to her, and liked her for many things, not for any astonishing capabilities as a servant, though her deficiencies were not more than average ones, differing in kind, but not in degree, from those of most other domestics in this uncultivated land.



On the whole, we have been more at liberty to follow our own devices, have been able to trust more things to her, and get more odd jobs performed by her than is usual, when we have had only one servant, though a certain "unhandiness"—to use her own expression—and "unsmartness"—by way of softening down the word "personal untidiness"—has somewhat interfered with our comfort.

As for slowness, I will not say a word of it, for it was thoroughly counterbalanced by her meek and quiet spirit, and in this imperfect world of ours there are corresponding virtues and vices, and we cannot expect the good without the evil. In short, I am sorry she is going. Our boy is clever, and at present his laziness does not interfere with our comfort, for if he does but keep the house supplied with wood, the pathways clear of snow, the poultry fed, and the plate and knives cleaned, we have nothing to complain of, though perhaps fuller occupation might be better for himself. It is on the strength of Margaret's invitation to enter into domestic details that I have said so much. Candle-making, both moulds and dips, was the order of the day a little while ago. I wish I could have an hour's conversation with a tallow-chandler. Can you procure me some hints concerning the business, as to the temperature of the room, temperature of the tallow, etc., etc.; what can prevent a dip from being thicker at the bottom than at the top? Also look at one properly made and tell me how near the wick reaches to the bottom of the candle. Some of the information you might get would perhaps not be applicable to our small scale of operations. I have nothing at present but my own experience to guide me, and feel that some more knowledge of the matter is desirable—try to help me to it.

*Monday, December 23.*—Active preparations for Christmas commenced to-day—raisin-stoning, sugar-scraping, etc., had been accomplished before, but some of the good things were now put together, and we deal much more largely in them than we ever did before. Our carpenter arrived this evening and we held a consultation on the making up of my footstool. I hope he will make a good job of it. I was considerably perplexed in the manufacture of a cord for it. At last I accomplished a neat one, with appropriate coloured braids wound round a strong string. From Mr. Taylor (the carpenter) we have this information respecting our clergyman, that his family consists of a girl and three boys, the first appearing to be ten or twelve years old. There was a very small congregation yesterday, Mr. Fidler's return being known to few, besides which many are away on the gay errand at Peterboro. I hear they had an impressive sermon on the text, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone,"—subject, the awfulness of being left to ourselves. We have lost a pig to-day—disease unknown, but a post-mortem examination is to take place to-morrow. I wonder how Miss Hamilton feels to-night!

*Wednesday, December 25, Christmas Day.*—How are they spending it at Seedly has been the question we have put to each other—happily, I hope. We have spent ours happily, but not merrily. Stillness has been quite the character of the day, and coming in the midst of a busy week it is not unpleasant, but I wish it could have been broken in upon by some of the laughing voices that have doubtless been sounding in your ears to-day. Of course, without sleigh and sleigh-drivers we could not go to church, and the absence of the congregation which used to assemble here has made the day completely different from what it was before. It has become

exceedingly mild again after somewhat severer frost for a day or two. I am afraid our winter will come in spring; certainly we have had very little of it yet. The sun shone very brightly here yesterday, and I hope it did so on the bride at Peterboro. A day's work has accomplished an exceedingly pretty footstool, and I scarcely think "Doveston" would have turned out a neater piece of work, though he might have charged twenty or thirty shillings for it. I think I must contrive to send some specimen of our cleverness to the bazaar. I have accomplished with the pencil what with good high prices might bring in five pounds, but I have some more yet to do. I inspected a little portfolio of John's the other day, containing some of my old sketches, and felt rather mortified to find them so pretty, for I cannot discover much increase of skill in my recent performances. With reference to your reading my journals to my Uncle Zachary, I can imagine that the earlier ones possessed some interest for any who cared for us; but not so this second series, and I hope you will discriminate.

*Sunday, December 29.*—John and the other wedding guests got back just in time to assemble round our table on Friday. The meeting was not quite a full one, but went off pleasantly, and the viands, top, bottom, and corners, looked beautiful, and did honour to the mistress of the house. All had gone off very well at Peterboro, though the ring was really a borrowed one! The bride, simply dressed in a lavender silk, looked yet, John thinks, the most elegant creature he ever saw, and acquitted herself with such grace that he said she might have done honour to the Queen's drawing-room. The ceremony, according to Scotch custom, was performed in the house. The bridegroom is remarkably inelegant, and his wedding garment does not appear to have

metamorphosed him for the occasion. The ladies in attendance and their dresses have been all duly described to us, also that of the gentlemen, from which it appears that very few of the latter wore their own clothes. This may surprise you, but not those who know to what extent the system of borrowing and lending is carried here. Wardrobes are often scantily furnished, and, moreover, the young men move about unencumbered with carpet-bags, and trust to each other for the necessary changes. It not unfrequently happens that three or four of them dine here, all more or less equipped in John's clothes. On one occasion Mrs. Hamilton, being in quest of some stray articles of her son's wardrobe, took the liberty of inspecting the linen of a young friend as it issued from the hands of his washerwoman, when she found every single piece was marked with another name than his own. This is a digression from the wedding, but I must return to it again to tell you that one of the bride's-maids seems to have appeared very agreeable in John's eyes, so that I had better introduce her to you. It is a Miss Forbes, the daughter of a naval officer, who has but recently come to this country, that is, since we did. The young lady, whom I have seen at our regatta, is very pleasing and lady-like in appearance, moreover, she has a fine voice, and sings well. One or two more weddings amongst his friends, some more lovely brides and happy bridegrooms, would soon bring John into a requisite state for taking matrimonial steps, so I hope that Mr. Wallis' continued attentions to Miss Fisher, and renewed rumours concerning Mr. Athill, may mean something. I am sure I ought not to wish John married unless a suitable person turns up, and the number of these is so very small that the matter seems well nigh hopeless. However, it is a comfortable creed that

marriages are made in heaven, and I am thankful to say it is mine. Winter seems setting in at last. We have high wind and deep snow to-day, and I fear there will be another very small congregation. John, however, is gone to church. After this, we may hope for good roads. The journey up from Peterboro was a very heavy one, and the young horse's shoulders are so galled that he will not be serviceable for two or three weeks.

Our patience, however, will not wait now much longer for our packages from Purdy's, so we shall endeavour to hire a team, and send for them at once.

*Tuesday, December 31.*—We have a fine, under-zero frost to-day, and now the advantages of plastering outside are fully proved. *A propos* of frost it is said that milk comes to Montreal market in sacks. If the fact is to be doubted, the possibility of it is not. But I must give the small remaining space to business. . . .  
*Jan. 5, 1840.*—I have only space left to say that our packages are arrived, and their contents are all safe—much approved and admired. I do not think any of our treasures were so long contemplated as dear Margaret's picture, which all seem now inclined to think my best performance.<sup>1</sup> I too feel a little proud of it. God bless you all.

<sup>1</sup> *N.B.*—My aunt's miniature of my mother.

1840

JOURNAL, March 1840. Blythe.

TIME flies very fast, but I can scarcely believe that the period for commencing my quarterly journal has arrived. The first reflection that presents itself on a reviewal of the time that has elapsed since the termination of my last is that no line from either of you has enlivened it. I am inclined to blame the winds and waves as much as you, however, several packets being, I understand, due, and another post will probably prove that you have been less remiss than appearances would lead us to believe. I hesitated to-day whether I should not postpone my journal until a more promising month, but I have resolved to let you take your chance, though I very much fear two-thirds of it will be filled with comments on the weather, at least if they bear the same proportion to it that the subject does to all our thoughts and conversation.

It is really one of supreme importance, and I reconcile myself to satiating you with it from the idea that it is characteristic of the country, where both in summer and winter we depend so entirely upon it for our roads, etc., etc. I recollect saying in my last that the horses were to be busy all February drawing in firewood, so little did I know about the matter. We

have had throughout it nothing but a succession of thaws, so that scarcely any snow now remains on the ground, and the whole month it has been scarcely possible to accomplish anything.

Still we have kept hoping for a return of winter, but begin now to give it up.

This morning, when I first looked out at a heavy cloud, hoping it was charged with snow, I was startled by a brilliant flash of lightning, and after a very decided thunderstorm we have had a complete spring day, every symptom of the winter having departed. There is generally the best sleighing in February, and doubtless the disappointment of it will be very generally felt. But in our case, you know, when the roads became practicable, first one horse, and then the other was laid up, and poor old "Rattler" (now no more) had only just been replaced when these thaws set in, so that most of the winter work is yet unaccomplished, and has a good chance of remaining so. If we are kept any longer in suspense therefore, you will be called upon to sympathise in our hopes and fears, otherwise we will endeavour to turn our thoughts towards spring, and forget that the firewood lies nearly a mile off in the bush, and that the horses have not earned their keep. Since the thaw lake travelling has been good; before it we had no passing at all on this part of the lake. Now there has been a little more intercourse with our neighbours of the lower end. Mr. Need was up for a day or two. Mr. and Mrs. Fraser came to see us yesterday, and the Dunsfords talk of doing so. John has employed his horses a little to bring up lumber from Bobcaygeon. I too have been meditating upon a trip down the lake, which you may perhaps hear of taking place in course of time. We are going to try to accomplish our call upon Mrs. Dennistoun to-morrow. Some of the

hindrances you are already acquainted with having hitherto prevented us from doing so, which, as she has been married upwards of two months, would seem rather extraordinary to those who are only accustomed to the facilities of the old country. I have only got three times to church as yet, which seemed unaccountable even to ourselves until we looked back, and observed how Sunday after Sunday some impediment arose.

*Monday, March 2.*—We have had a brilliant day for our expedition; it might have been May instead of March. There is nothing like winter left, excepting the ice and a little snow. We called at the Falls, and took up Mrs. Fidler, who wished likewise to pay her respects to the bride, and then proceeding across Camerons Lake, made our call, partook of the wedding cake, etc., etc. We gave also our invitation, but the departing season did not permit of its being accepted, for Mr. Dennistoun has like ourselves been minus a horse for part of the winter, and has now work of more absolute importance for them than taking his lady to pay dinner visits. His new mansion looks a little rough yet, but perhaps not more so than ours did the first winter. One is so soon reconciled to what must be, that I thought very little about our own unfinished state. When the snow first departs it reveals many blemishes that one had almost forgotten, and I thought the village at the Falls looked almost more wild than ever to-day. In the clearing sleighing is now very bad, but there is still some tolerable road in the bush. With all the shaking of bush travelling I think it exceedingly pleasant, and infinitely preferable to skimming along the surface of the lake, which in the long-run would become exceedingly monotonous. There is a great deal of variety in the details of forest scenery, and I think it



would be long before the peculiar beauties would cease to excite pleasurable sensations in me. In returning we called on Mr. and Mrs. Hoare. They are now in possession of Mr. Jamieson's house and farm, he having, I suppose, by this time sailed for England. I am glad to have a few more elderly people amongst us; we want variety. But I wish it was less difficult for the old to move about. I am afraid this pair at the Falls and the pair here will scarcely meet until the lake opens. I never felt so little tired of winter before. Independently of the substantial reasons we have for regretting its early departure, I could wish myself back at the beginning of the year. With the exception of two or three frosts of extreme severity but of short duration, the weather has been more enjoyable than I have known it before, and I regret to see the winter evening getting shorter and shorter every day.

*Tuesday, March 3.*—John made an expedition to Bobcaygeon to-day for lumber. The ice was very good in the morning, but very soft at night. He invited some of the gentlemen from the lower end of Thursday, to help to eat up some of our provisions. We had very little fresh meat all winter until John's last visit to Peterboro, when for the first time he had the means of bringing up a load, and accordingly stocked our larder with a quarter of beef and half a sheep. From that time the thaw set in, and it has required great contrivance not to lose much of the enjoyment of these luxuries. We had a pedlar here to-day, the first incident of the kind since we came into the country. His goods were all in the tin line, and we resolved to make a purchase by way of encouragement. I think he received such very effectually, for the shining metal proved very attractive, not to

ourselves alone, but, luckily for him, to a neighbour who happened to be there.

*Wednesday, March 4.*—The chief incident of the day has been the departure of our servant Bridget. She had been with us between nine and ten months, something longer than any other we have had. Her deficiencies were many, but she had some good points, for which I regret her. My mother thinks that I have led you to suppose that we have had a little more leisure this winter than the last. You must take a little to mean a *very* little, the whole amount at any time is but small. This is the inevitable result of the present state of the country, and a little too, perhaps, of a family habit of multiplying our undertakings. As to the first cause, there is no possibility of its diminishing, so far as I can see into futurity. Society and civilisation increase, but general facilities do not increase, therefore the more we advance the more we must exert ourselves. However, as exertion is good for us all, there is no reason to complain of this. Our friend in need, Mary Scarry, is come to us to-day to see us over our party to-morrow, after which I suppose she will go back to the sugar-making, and we must get Sally Jordan as a help until we get a servant. Mary's arrival does not give me the pleasure it used to do before my good opinion of her was shaken. Yet when I see her bright look, and hear her cheery voice, I can scarcely fancy there is the weight of an evil conscience within. I begin to think that those lead the easiest lives who keep no servant, and can simplify their housekeeping arrangements accordingly. Mrs. Fraser and Mrs. Fidler are the enviable ones at present. The Dunsfords have been multiplying their cares, for they are keeping three servants at present, and I am afraid are raising wages. John made another trip to Bobcaygeon to-day, but I

think it will be his last, for the ice is getting baddish. There are some amusing love affairs going forward at the lower end, which give great entertainment to the two old bachelors (Mr. Need and John have lately acquired that character). Hymen has certainly a long train of votaries at present. I think I would not have John figure at the fag end of it, but head another procession to his temple a little time hence. I have one grievance to record to-day—the post brings us no letter.

*Friday, March 6.*—We had a sharpish frost again yesterday, which seemed very invigorating, and the day went off very well. The cooks performed well, the waiter performed well, and the guests performed well, doing justice to the entertainment, and laughing and talking very merrily.

They were Mr. Need, Mr. Dunsford junior, Mr. Jones, Mr. Edward Atthill, Mr. M'Laren, and Mr. Unwin, a resident at present on Pigeon Lake, and a visitor here for the first time—a very grave, quiet personage. He rather contemplates settling on this lake, but I think not at our end. The large family of young people below, all full of gaiety and enjoyment, give a somewhat different character to the society there. We are much more sedate at this end, as may well be, for though pretty evenly divided as to numbers, I daresay our united years are little short of double theirs. We are sometimes amused to see the youngest member of our family looked up to and made the confidante and adviser of so many juniors.

The whole party were with us again at breakfast, after which a sleigh load descended the lake. The ice is very doubtful. John broke through on his last trip, and how his horses scrambled out he scarcely knows. Their hind legs were down up to the rump, and he

himself thrown upon their heels, but the sleigh never actually stopped. Its impetus, I suppose, materially assisted the horses in extricating themselves. The worst result was that John got very wet, and has a cold in consequence. I am glad to say he has nothing to take him on the ice again. To-day, after the house was restored to order, I made some preparations for a candle-making, that I may be ready to take advantage of the first cold day. As the operation takes place in the kitchen it must be really cold without to suit me. My mother, I am sorry to say, is suffering from pain in the face at present, not exactly toothache, but coming on in spasms occasionally.

*Sunday, March 8.*—Yesterday was a very uneventful day, and a very cold one. The wind blew through John's house so much that he came to nurse his cold up here, and I am sorry to say it seems to require more of such treatment than his colds generally do. To-day, in consequence, we spent our Sunday at home. John and I have been looking over all our prints and drawings in search of something that will suit a lilliputian album, which has been handed to me for a contribution—the first thing of the kind that has reached this end of the world. This reminds me to tell you that I have just finished a pair of screens as a wedding present to Mr. Wallis. I think the performance very successful. They are on wood, in the old style, but a little more brilliant in colour than former ones. I have adopted turpentine and varnish instead of water-colour for my border, and the colouring-matter is no other than the powder blue you sent us out for less elegant purposes. When I have filled a leaf of the little album I intend my industry to run in a more useful channel for the next six months. The bazaar will not now, I think, take place, in fact it

has been all along too uncertain for any one to prepare for it with any energy. John had only executed one little article when he began to see what the end of it would be. Mr. Wallis has been quite otherwise occupied, and now his journey home is doubtful. I believe our servant hunt is over for the present. Mary has intimated her desire to remain with us, for the twofold purpose of earning something for her journey home, and of preparing her parents for parting from her. The end to be accomplished is one that we shall be so glad to promote that I suppose we shall get over our other scruples, and if a good opportunity presented itself I should be glad to help her towards her passage money, that she might at once join her husband at home, who is in too good employment to think of coming out. I can fancy it is a terrible struggle to leave her parents, but the sooner it is over the better.

*Monday, March 9.*—Mr. Toker came in to dinner to-day. He is going again to England next month, to make final arrangements, I fancy, for his marriage. House-building seems most in his head at present, as far as I could gather, but he is singularly bad to hear, and I had to give it up. School was the chief business of my morning.

*Tuesday, March 10.*—There was a fall of snow last night that would have delighted us a fortnight ago. As it is it can but partially restore the roads, for the old foundation was quite gone, and the sun has such power now that what is not well trodden down disappears most rapidly. However, we have been getting more firewood drawn in to-day, and may do so perhaps for a few days longer, which is a good thing. Perchance, too, another fall may prolong the practicability of it. Mr. Toker left us again after breakfast. This gentleman, nicknamed "the Sagamore," is much more

like an Indian than an Englishman. He has a quantity of black hair, and a swarthy complexion, and by his male friends is thought very handsome. His lady-love just like the creation of Pigmalion, undergoing transformation, the marble having just begun to assume a little transparency, but scarcely as yet any colour. What a contrast!!<sup>1</sup>

I got my candle-making over to-day, and now I have only to fill the moulds a few times, and I shall have made up my half cask of tallow. Ten dippings made very respectable candles to-day, whereas what I was obliged to make in summer after four-and-twenty were most miserable pig-tails. We have got pretty sharp frost again. The thermometer is down at five to-night, and most likely will dip below zero before morning. After all the mild weather we have had we feel this cold, but in January we should have thought it a warm night. John is much better to-day. He has had a great many colds this winter, and the two last have been more on his chest than usual.

*Wednesday, March 11.*—The improved roads brought Mr. and Mrs. Dennistoun to return our call to-day. I rejoiced that they did not break in upon my candle-making yesterday. A small luncheon of cold ham, bread and butter, and bun loaf was their entertainment. The only news they brought us was that the admired Miss Fortye is again at liberty—admiration, however, seems to have been a little cooled by some of the circumstances of her short engagement. This party was scarcely gone when Mr. Wallis arrived to engage John to go down with him to Peterboro, and possibly to Kingston, but that will not be known till they reach the former place. It appears that there has been a little playing at cross purposes. I cannot tell you the

<sup>1</sup> *N.B.*—A daughter of Capt. Rubidge—sister of Mrs. Hartley Dunsford.

whole story, but the conclusion I draw from it, and from the other romances of the neighbourhood, is that the gentlemen are not perfectly competent to manage the details of their "affairs" without the assistance of female friends. Failing these John is the confidante and adviser.

A few preparations for John's expedition succeeded the summons, and my mother's skill as a laundress was put in requisition to make him presentable for the possible part he may have to play. The post brings no letters again, or English newspapers.

*Thursday, March 12.*—Mr. Wallis took an early breakfast with us, and the travellers were soon on their way, favoured by a beautiful morning. I presented my screens, incomplete as yet for want of handles, which neither Toronto nor Kingston could furnish (what a country!). I have been again trying to drive a little intelligence into the untutored children of the forest. I have somewhat enlarged my system of tuition, and another branch of knowledge will be added to their extensive acquirements! I get assistance from my mother and Aunt Alice; the former has taken one little scribe entirely under her superintendence, and the latter often hears one or other of the reading lessons. Mr. Fidler has twenty-eight pupils, some much more advanced in years and accomplishments than mine. My mother has been again supplying the deficiencies of our washerwoman, which obliges us to keep all the better table linen at home, and every other article whose smoothness is of much importance.

*Friday, March 13.*—I have been writing to Mrs. Weld to-day, a thing I should have done some time since. My mother has been writing to you a letter which will probably reach you before this journal. A visit to John's house, a little candle-making, and an

hour or two of steady sewing have filled up the day. I am afraid the weather is getting mild again, which will be bad for the travellers.

*Sunday, March 15.*—Yesterday I scribbled a page or two in my mother's letter instead of journalising. The bright sunshine took my mother down to John's house, which generally has a visit from us during his absence, to receive a little extra dusting, etc., etc. Aunt Alice the most frequently walks down to it, being chief superintendent of his wardrobe. Sunday has again found me unable to go to church for want of my driver. John's men are not very experienced drivers, and it might have been unwise to trust myself with them. The roads are very indifferent at present. Mr. Wallis got an upset the other morning coming down, in going through a mudhole. We cannot afford to spend much labour upon road-making in this country. The trees cannot be cut down close to the ground. When there is plenty of snow the low stumps are covered, but as it disappears more and more skill is required in keeping clear of them, and of other hindrances. John is a very careful driver. The Sunday evening amusement of reading old letters is not yet exhausted. We perused a year's correspondence today, dated Mount Pleasant, where such a tissue of domestic troubles was recorded as made one well satisfied to suffer here chiefly those arising from ignorance, and other deficiencies incident to a wild uncultured education. I say chiefly, for the human soil is full of all sorts of weeds here as elsewhere, but many are necessarily stunted in so rigid a clime which thrive most luxuriantly in the hot-bed of a large city. At home, there being a class regularly educated for service gives good facilities on the one hand, but on the other that class forms a sort of party, constantly



striving for their own interests in opposition to those of the party they serve. The very circumstance of difficulty in procuring servants, too, tends to make one more willing to endure trifling imperfections. You take them in a measure "for better for worse," and in some degree the happy results of an indissoluble connection may ensue. Our little damsel of last winter is now living with Mrs. Hamilton, and, I understand, in favour. She has no fellow-servant now, which will suit her peculiar disposition better, and powers she certainly possesses. Aunt Alice rather alarmed us with sudden indisposition this evening, but in half an hour she was much better, and is now chatting very cheerfully with my mother.

*Monday, March 16.*—A busy day. We had scarcely got through the extra morning's occupations when school assembled, and the children had scarcely got settled to their books when Mr. Fidler arrived. They and their books were dispersed in a second or two, for we had omitted to have a schoolroom fire to-day. Aunt Alice and I took it in turns to be with the children and our guest. I mentioned in a letter that we supposed his brother in the West Indies to have married one of the little Smiths, Mrs. Jarvies Naylor's cousins. We asked him if it was so, and he said his brother had married about ten years ago a young lady of seventeen, but her previous name had not been mentioned to him. He himself had strongly recommended to his brother a Miss Smith, known to him slightly, by whom he had sent out a letter to Jamaica. Time and age agreeing, there can be little doubt of the identity. It is curious that he should first learn of his advice having been taken from strangers in Canada. It is singular how very rarely, in these remote regions, you meet with a person who, after a time, you do not

find to have had some mutual acquaintance with you. I was pleased to hear the following little circumstance from Mr. Fidler. Half a dozen of his elder scholars of their own accord brought their axes with them one day, and as soon as school was over betook themselves to the wood, borrowed a horse and sleigh, and before night brought in several loads of fire-wood, and piled them up at his door. The evening has been busy too, we are preparing for a great muslin wash, and shall have the pleasure of using our English starch.

*Tuesday, March 17.*—We had a misfortune this morning. A ham we had put to smoke down the chimney got somewhat over roasted, so that the meat slipped out of the skin and came tumbling down upon the fire, all broken to pieces, of course, but we got a little savoury picking out of it. We have been rather famous for our hams hitherto, but I am afraid we shall fail this year, both in quantity and quality. We got through our ironing to-day, and the starch performed very well except for chapping my hands a little. They have escaped altogether this winter, owing to my wearing mittens very constantly. The brown ones sent to me by one of your cousins are now on my hands. I am indebted to her for part of my comfort. We were afraid that we were going to be interrupted in our work, a sleigh appearing on the lake, but it proved to be only Mr. Wallis' empty one being sent home. The gentlemen were left together at Coburg, therefore we presume on their way to the marriage. Travelling will be miserable, as the snow has quite disappeared again, though it has frozen very persistently until to-day. Being St. Patrick's day we sent our two Irish servants down to John's in the evening, giving them a bottle of whiskey, a sugar bason, and a

cake to make merry with. They have just come back, with very contented faces. To-morrow is once more post-day. Will the evening bring us our long-expected letter? I look forward with less of expectation than I have done before, we have so often been disappointed in our hopes. It is now very nearly three months since we heard from you.

*Thursday, March 19.*—The post brought us no letter from you yesterday. Twelve newspapers and three letters were spread before us, and not one of the latter was from England. Our disappointment was great. Even if one letter is lost it is high time to look for another. We may possibly get some interest from the letters that did arrive when they come to be opened. Nothing of any interest occurred either yesterday or to-day. We have been trying to concoct legs of pork from the pickle tub into hams. I manufactured a few sweet biscuits, and my mother rummaged over places that had got a little out of order. She is preparing for a grand scouring, of which you will probably hear to-morrow. We have been tantalised with a little snow both these days. This one was ushered in with thunder, then pretty thick snow, subsequently a little rain, and at last a very dense aguish-looking fog. The roads must be terrible for a bridal party. I went down to John's, and almost stuck fast at each step in a glutinous mud, with which also I had the pleasure of making a nearer acquaintance.

*Friday, March 20.*—The details of to-day were anything but pleasant; the result, however, is very satisfactory. We got Sally Jordan to come and give her assistance, and we ladies were as busy as the servants, rubbing furniture, etc., etc. Not, however, busier than we have been on a like occasion at Bootle. Here, indeed, we may make a comparison in favour of

this much-abused country. You lose no respect by such exertions. In Mount Pleasant, where our establishment was very small, we used occasionally at busy times to make our beds, etc. On one occasion a housemaid, receiving her dismissal, was inclined to retaliate by a little insolence, and told us we certainly were no ladies, or we should not make beds. Here one of our domestics would be surprised, and perhaps think herself a little ill-used if, in any extra bustle, we should be sitting in our drawing-room. They are apt to think it quite right that we should be taking our due share, and are certainly our "helps," though we do not call them so, as in the States. I cannot perceive that anything like disrespect is engendered by this relative position of mistress and maid.

*Sunday, March 22.*—I was prevented taking out my journal last night by the arrival of our two travellers. There will be no bride, it appears, for two or three weeks longer. The gentlemen were at Coburg, undergoing together the agreeable operation of tooth-drawing. That there should be an expedition at all in an uncertainty must appear strange on your side the water. But when you consider the state of the post in this country, where three weeks might easily elapse before an interchange of letters could take place, circumstances may be conceived to render it necessary. The Bishop's letter from Toronto arrived ten days after date; had it required an answer six more days must necessarily pass before one could be despatched, which might be two more on the road. Intercourse is slow and uncertain to a degree quite unknown in a land of mail-coaches and macadamised roads. After breakfast this morning the gentlemen set out for church on horseback; sleighing is now quite over. All the news the travellers brought home related to the present prevailing topic.

If I were to give it you all I should get quite too gossiping. Even the public news is about marrying and giving in marriage, the Queen's wedding being the latest arrived.

*Wednesday, March 25.*—I have passed three days—they are easily narrated. Monday was only distinguished by the slaughtering of a pig (not by ourselves), and Tuesday by the cutting up of the said animal. In the evening our carpenter arrived to commence preparations for the new building, and various preliminary discussions interfered with my usual plan of taking out my journal, and led us to talk until a very late hour. The plan has been slightly altered from the one proposed which I sent you, so when anything is definitely settled I will sketch you another.

*Thursday, March 26.*—If you would have any of my thoughts on a Thursday you must be content with reminiscences of school hours. I tried two of my scholars for the first time in writing from dictation. The results were about equal. Two of my least, who have just accomplished counting to one hundred, wrote me the figures up to that number very correctly, and one of them beautifully. Some of my very little ones begin evidently to have a pleasure in reading an easy book. It is rather unfortunate that my very biggest should also be my very dullest. In calculation I hear them very much all in a class, and where I can multiply my number of slates. I may be able to extend the system of simultaneous instruction a little further, but it is not in many things that children of fourteen and seven can go on together.

*Friday, March 27.*—Unpacking and repacking barrels of pork, and boiling pickle made this a busy day, and there is more of the same sort to do to-morrow. Not so, I am happy to say, with regard to what has been

of late a daily occupation, for I have put the last tallow into the moulds. I begin to feel ashamed of recording these household occupations. You have had enough of them to form an idea of how we go on, so I think I shall drop these vulgar matters in future journals. We had a begging petition to-day, the second only since we came into this country. The former one was on the occasion of the death of a cow; this was on the levy of a fine with costs for selling whiskey without a license. Every one seemed disposed to open their purse-strings, for though the man, of course, was wrong, his case seemed hard, because the fining magistrate is a tavern keeper. Law is rather curiously carried on in this irregular country. On one occasion damage had been awarded, and the jury gave in some curious sum, ending with odd shillings, pence, and halfpence. It was proved that they had not been able to come to an agreement what the sum should be, so struck an average of the different amounts advocated.

*Saturday, March 28.*—Pickling, packing, and smoking went on at a great rate again to-day; stewing, etc., will have to come next week; but enough of house-keeping details. Rain has set in to-day, which seems to promise early opening of the waters. As John, however, must go down to Peterboro to attend a meeting on the seventh of April, we are hoping the ice may continue passable until then, as it scarcely can disappear before that time. All the frost we have had since the ground was uncovered will have killed, I suppose, half the wheat in the country.

*Sunday, March 29.*—Another wet day. John went to church, and we do not expect him home until to-morrow. I omitted to tell you that the Bishop promises to advocate Mr. Fidler's cause with the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel," so I hope

he may receive the full allowance of a hundred a year, which is their usual grant.

*Monday, March 30.*—We have to-day most particular cause to be thankful, John's house has had a narrow escape of being burnt down. Yesterday afternoon John's man, William Ellis, set out to walk with our carpenter to Jordan's, but after going part of the way changed his mind, and turned back, and also just stepped into John's house. The floor had taken fire, and one of the beams was quite burnt through. The fire was soon extinguished, but a very short time more might have made a very difficult case of it. When a log gets burnt through and breaks in the middle, the parts often fall asunder with some force, and scatter fragments far and wide. Such, most probably, had been the case now, and had not the man turned back John would, in all probability, have returned this morning to find his little home a heap of ashes, and his clothes, papers, and valuables of all sorts consumed. It frightens one to think of it only. In what consternation we should have been. There is something awful in these wooden habitations, especially after one has seen one blaze. There was a very considerable fire a short time ago at Peterboro. To be burnt out is a very common occurrence here. May it never be our fate! Mr. Wallis' engagement has just become publicly known, in a roundabout way from Scotland. Intercourse seems pretty rapid in some cases. Mr. Hamilton was here to-day on his way from Peterboro. His brother-in-law, Mr. Fortye, appears to be in a very precarious state.

*Tuesday, March 31.*—The month leaves us in frost and snow. My feeling with regard to the post this week is that if ever we are to have another letter it must come now.

In a letter dated May 16 mention is made of the arrival of two letters, dated February 23 and March 11, both of which arrived in April, and had been an unusually long time on the way.

In one of them mention is made of the death of Mrs. William Hornby (*née* Ellen Cross), which was a sad loss.

Mr. Wallis' marriage took place during the month of May, an event in the Fenelon circle of friends and neighbours.

JOURNAL, June 1840. Blythe.

*Monday, June 1.*—I believe it is a fortnight since our last letters went, during which time my cold and Aunt Alice's leg have been improving, and both the one and the other have ceased to give any anxiety. A week ago, however, we were so little satisfied about Aunt Alice that we despatched our youth down to Peterboro for the doctor. But regardless of the ten dollars that would have been his, he has not attended to our call, and happily, it appears, we shall do without him. Early last week John went down to Peterboro to attend a meeting of magistrates, and on Friday he returned, rowing up Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, and accompanied by Mr. Atthill, who has at length made his appearance amongst us. Yesterday I and the gentlemen went to church. My mother was not up to it, being less well than usual, I believe in consequence of some fly-bites, which swell and inflame with her greatly, when on her face and neck. I think we shall give up our rambles into the bush for the present. The bride and bridegroom did not appear at church. I believe they intended it, but wishing to avoid coming in too early they put it off too long. There is something much



more public in our little church than in your large ones at home. You can walk quietly into your pew, and, when the service is over, quietly out of it, without having anything to do with any one. Here everybody knows everybody, and when the clergyman has given his blessing you just find yourself in a room, surrounded by your friends and acquaintances, and a general sort of greeting commences. Did we greet one another with a holy kiss it would be all very well, but we shake hands, say "How do you do,"—"Very fine day," etc., just as we should do anywhere else, which is not altogether agreeable to one's old feelings of propriety. Our friend Mr. Atthill gave us a sermon. I do not suppose I ever saw him so long serious together before. His clerical profession has left him just what he was, and our risible muscles have been pretty well exercised within the last few days. To-day the gentlemen are gone down to Mr. Edward Atthill's, and are to pay a visit to the Dunsfords, where Edward is a suitor, but not a prosperous one at present. We have just been despatching an invitation to the Dennistouns for Thursday—I hope they will come.

*Tuesday, June 2.*—Our invitation was accepted, and just as we were pondering upon the best method of manufacturing a top, bottom, and four corners out of pork and poultry, arrived a present of veal from Mrs. Hoare. No hare or pheasant ever arrived more opportunely than did this rarity, unseen here for two years. It has set our minds at rest so completely that we have not again discussed the arrangement of our viands. John, I fancy, will have invited some other friends from the lower end, by way of giving a little variety. I begin to wish the day were over, and to lament that we have nothing more juvenile and attractive for the entertainment of the youthful bride. I must try to brighten

up for the occasion, but I feel myself fast approaching six-and-thirty, little less than double the age of Mrs. Dennistoun. We have had a very wet afternoon, and our gentlemen, I suppose in consequence, have not made their appearance. I daresay the voices of the Miss Dunsfords are again enchanting them this evening, and that bad weather for once has been rather welcome than otherwise. The rain was beginning to be very much wanted in the garden. We have had a spell of beautiful weather, very hot certainly—but now we are enjoying a good fire again. I wish the weather may settle before Thursday, and also afterwards enable me to pay my visit to Mrs. Wallis before John goes. He talks of accompanying Mr. Atthill to Toronto, where he has some business, and afterwards to Newmarket, the abode of his lady-love—Mr. Atthill's, not John's. Mr. Atthill is afterwards going home immediately, I believe, but being rather an uncertain, unpunctual person, I shall not trouble him with any despatches. Dear Alice's letter, accompanying the dahlia roots, shall be answered by some other opportunity. The fate of the poor dahlias will, I doubt not, be narrated, and lamented in our next letter.

*Thursday, June 4.*—Yesterday presented nothing worthy of observation. A few preparations were made for the coming entertainment. The day was pretty fine, yet brought us no tidings of our gentlemen. My mother got a little fidgetty towards night. However, they reached the landing, accompanied by Mr. Boyd, early in the morning. I perceived them as I stepped out of bed, and they arrived to breakfast. Having made our room ready for Mrs. Dennistoun, I slept from under my mosquito curtains, and counted eleven bites upon my face only. I shall be a beauty to-night. They do not, however, swell and inflame at all like

what they used to do. The first sting, however, remains as painful as ever, and how painful when there are scores upon you at once you can scarcely imagine.

*Friday, June 5.*—All hands were busy yesterday. John's friends had induced him to stay another day by the promise to help him to paint a boat, so they were engaged upon the *Fairy* all the morning under the woodshed, just in front of the kitchen window, where many of our operations proceeded. I must say they had the consideration not to look aside. The dinner prepared was soup at the top, removed by a boiled fillet of veal, pork at the bottom; corners, spring chickens, ham and veal steaks, and maccaroni. Second course, pudding, tart, trifle, and cheese cakes. It did not all appear upon the table, however, as we were disappointed of our principal guests. Mr. and Mrs. Dennistoun sent their excuses; the latter was not quite well, and the weather rather doubtful. I think that Mr. Dennistoun carried his devotion further than necessary by also remaining away, and so much reducing our party. Edward Atthill too, who was to have come, only arrived in the evening, so we were quite a small party, and some of our luxuries were reserved for luncheon to-day, when we expect two boats-full of Dunsfords, coming up to pay their respects to the bride at the Falls. When we, who had worked in sight of each other all day, cast off our red shirts and our aprons, and dressed ourselves like ladies and gentlemen at home to sit down to our meal, I was reminded of children playing at a feast, the girls having prepared it, while the boys painted their little boat. This is the fourth time in succession that we have vacated our room for company, and have been disappointed of its expected occupants.

*Saturday, June 6.*—This morning we were to go up

to pay our visit to Mrs. Wallis, but the weather did not promise to befriend us. However, we made our preparations so much the sooner in hopes of getting there and back before rain, and actually embarked in our canoe. The wind rose so rapidly, however, that we decided to desist from the undertaking. As the rain was not quite at hand we took a little sail into the middle of the lake, meeting all the big waves by way of getting a tossing, and being reminded a little of the ocean. I enjoyed it, being my first canoe expedition in a gale. There has been a small shower, but I very much fear the regular downfall is reserving itself for to-morrow. Our cat, who was the greatest pet imaginable, has mysteriously disappeared—we do not seem able to keep our cats.

*Tuesday, June 9.*—From Saturday to Tuesday is rather a long interval. Yesterday my pen was otherwise employed, namely, in writing to my dear little Alice, as I have changed my mind and sent her a letter by Mr. Atthill. I will return to where I left off and proceed regularly with the narrative of our transactions—we had just returned from our adventure on the lake. About the same time another adventure was occurring on Camerons Lake. Robert Hamilton and Mr. Beresford, youths from sixteen to twenty, were foolishly hoisting sails when their boat upset in the middle of the lake. The accident was witnessed by Mrs. Dennistoun from the shore, but she had no glass to enable her to ascertain the extent of it. Mr. Dundas put off in a boat, but the wind was so strong that it was two hours before he returned to relieve the watchers from their anxiety. He found the two young men had climbed on to the top of their upset boat. It must have been a terrible state of suspense. Edward Atthill arrived again to dinner on

Saturday, and shortly afterwards the storm burst in good earnest, and happily cleared the atmosphere for Sunday. However, the wind continued so high that my mother did not venture to church, as she wished to have done. We juniors did, and Mr. Atthill read prayers. The bride was in church, and as she wore white gloves, I suppose it was considered a formal appearance, though most informal, it appears, as she sat on one bench and her husband several benches behind her. She was dressed in a rich drab silk, with fancy straw, or chip bonnet, and white ribbons. She is far from a nice-looking woman when in morning costume. After church we walked up with her, which visit she must accept as a call for the present.

Mr. Wallis has got a verandah now put up, which is a great improvement to the house, and I hear with pleasure that he has commenced building a new kitchen. Rumour has been pleased to say that he was likely to leave the neighbourhood, but these improvements do not look as if he contemplated it himself. We returned to dinner, and in the evening Mr. Atthill took leave of us, and went down the lake with his brother. John has just set out to join him, and to-morrow they proceed on their journey. On Sunday we sat up very late, listening to and talking over all the news John had picked up during his visit to Peterboro and since. Another love affair has been confided to him by one of our circle. It is to end in nothing, but there is one feature in the case so novel and so droll that I must tell it you. The lady, though afterwards more distinct in her refusal, at first replied that she was engaged until the first of October, and though she should certainly never marry the gentleman, yet that before that date she could not consider herself at liberty to form any other engagement. It was more than a week

afterwards that the gentleman further ascertained her determination also not to marry himself. On Monday we received John's instructions respecting garden, etc., and made preparation for the departure, making out a list of errands for him at Toronto, and writing letters for Mr. Atthill to take. I suppose his name will be a sufficient introduction without the formal request of William's attentions to this friend of his brother. We had a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Dennistoun in the afternoon, one of apology, I suppose, for breaking their engagement. Mrs. Dennistoun looked very pretty. Mrs. Hamilton is not at home at present, she went down to the Front, and there met with an accident, which has kept her away. She was upset out of a waggon, and had both her legs much cut and bruised. With all her young men at home by themselves she must feel very anxious. Monday being one of my ordinary schooldays, I may as well tell you that I have declared holiday for a short time—perhaps a month. I began to feel the want of this additional liberty on sundry accounts. I intend to have another holiday during harvest, for at that time they come so irregularly that it is just as well not to have them at all. John started this afternoon in his canoe. When the time came he looked as if he did not half like leaving his concerns here, but I hope they will go on smoothly. The chief business on hand at present is happily under Taylor's inspection, being the drains and foundations of the new building, erecting the fence, preparing lime, etc. As for the rest, we shall surely manage amongst us to superintend it. I am captain of the *Fairy* during his absence. I shall only feel the charge a heavy one at the moment of steering her into port, lest I should scrape a little of the bright green paint from her sides. The garden, I am afraid, will not do any of us credit

this year, notwithstanding the pains bestowed upon it. The long spell of dry weather was much against it, and the late rains have not revived it much. We have a brood of ducklings out to-day—our first essay in this line. Ducks require great care in this country, the winter does not suit them, but we intend to make the experiment.

*Wednesday, June 10.*—This morning we thought we were going to have visitors to breakfast. A boat was at the landing with a parasol in it. It was Mr. and Mrs. Hoare going a trip down the lake, and they left word that they would call as they came back, and take a cup of tea with us, which they accordingly did. This is the first time my mother has seen the lady, and she pronounces her a good sort of woman, which is just the description I should give of her. I am glad to see that she seems much more happy and cheerful than she used to do. We had many discussions on topics connected with women's duties in this country,—the management of a diary, etc., etc. I think it very likely that we may get a useful hint or two from her experience. She makes her butter in the Devonshire fashion, and I think in winter it may be an improvement upon our own way, for we are sadly plagued with the cream getting a bitter taste, which many consider is in consequence of cold. Perhaps the scalding may make it keep better. The various methods of making bread, cheese, candles, etc., were also commented upon, so you see what ladies talk about here. These useful topics are, however, not unmingled with a little general gossip. We hear the Bishop is expected about the first of July. I hope that we may accomplish one or two improvements before he comes. We are to have a collection next Sunday to try to raise funds towards general expenses. Some additional benches are absolutely

necessary, and it is likewise desirable to board off a corner for a vestry. Mr. Wallis' friends at home have disposed of what had been prepared for the bazaar for between twenty and thirty pounds, which will be added to the funds for the parsonage. The house does not proceed rapidly, and I am afraid the building is not carried on with the strict economy which our limited means require. Mr. Wallis is the only trustee sufficiently near to take the active superintendence, and John says that at present he thinks of nothing but that wife of his. We expect them to call to-morrow on their way down to the Dunsfords.

*Thursday, June 11.*—This very fine day did not bring our expected visitors but another party—Mr. and Mrs. Fidler and their four young ones. All our visitors seem coming at once, and then, I daresay, we shall have a long spell without any. These and those of yesterday, I fancy, have been waiting for the same event to set them at liberty—the launching of Mr. Hoare's boat. This is a new craft on the lake. There used to be so few that there was little difficulty in naming any that passed, but it is very different now. Mr. and Mrs. Wallis went down the lake a little after eleven, and passed here on their return between eight and nine, so I think they have returned the Dunsfords' visit fully—in length. We did a little weeding in the garden in the morning, and this afternoon, being in expectation of visitors, I sat down quietly to read, and took up *Robinson Crusoe*, which is about as new to me as if I had never read it. We are a little dismayed to-night by finding that our carpenter is going home again, and that the new building must pause for a week or ten days. Taylor has a house to build for himself this summer, besides his crops to look after. Had we known this a little earlier, we could have offered the consolation of



fellow-sufferers to Mr. Fidler, who is greatly annoyed at the slow progress of his house, and has evidently not yet acquired the portion of patience requisite for a resident in the woods.

*Friday, June 12.*—A cool, cloudy morning sent us all a-weeding into the garden. John would not have been well pleased to see some of us at work, but so long as anything wants doing it is very difficult, and for my mother perfectly impossible, to keep quiet, so there can be no quiet for her in this country. We tried to get some of the children to weed, but none can be spared, everybody is planting potatoes. Our kitchen garden being new ground requires a great deal of attention in this respect. People can never increase their comforts without at the same time adding to their cares. The rain sent us in, and I got a little more work out of my needle than I often do. One ought to get all one's sewing done in winter time, for though gardening is by no means a regular occupation now, yet, one way or other, time slips away most sadly at this season. We have a subject of anxiety at present which, as peculiar to this country, I must relate. The horses are wandering somewhere in the bush, and day after day a man is employed in hunting for them, but they do not turn up. You know some of the *contre-temps* of last winter, how old "Rattler" died, and when a successor was provided the roads suddenly failed, and the horses were almost useless. When Mr. Toker went to England John agreed to take his horses during his absence, in order that he might keep two ploughs going, also providing himself with a new plough. This, on the first day's using, broke, and though it could easily be repaired by the blacksmith, yet none other could do it, and our Vulcan had the day before met with a severe accident. So John's plans were frustrated, yet he had his two

pair of horses to keep. He is not well off for pasture this year, and a little time since, as is a common practice here, he turned his own pair out into the bush, taking them by water to Sturgeon point, that they might not come straight home. Now that it is time to look after them the search seems more difficult than we expected, and though the men seem to think it impossible they can be lost, their prolonged absence makes one very uneasy.

*Saturday, June 13.*—There was a great clearance in the garden to-day. We got two weeders, and the rain had softened the ground for the operation. We continued to take a part ourselves, for it was cool, with a beautiful breeze from the lake. I had the *Fairy* put into the water, but she leaks quite too much for our use to-morrow. We have the promise of a boat, however, for Mr. and Mrs. Wallis called in the afternoon, and the former, hearing of our difficulty, proposed to send for us. They brought our letters and papers. Charles Weld's letter arrived. He seems to think himself very fortunate in his appointment. To see him settled at last must be a great relief to his friends at Ravenswell.

*Sunday, June 14.*—The *Calypto* came for us, pulled by Mr. M'Laren and Mr. Hutchinson. It was a fine and cool morning, which was much in my mother's favour, and we were in time to take the hill in a very leisurely way. We had quite a gay congregation, there being no fewer than seven ladies. The bride looked much better than on the Sunday of her first appearance. Her dress was of another shade, richer than the former. I think it would have stood erect by itself. From John's observations last Sunday, and my mother's to-day, I find I look somewhat too simply dressed and unfashionable amongst them. I have no objection to improve in the latter respect as I wear out my present

stock, and get more knowledge of what ought to be. But if I can keep a resolution I will not improve in the former. If the follies and extravagances of the world are to be introduced upon Sturgeon Lake, we might as well, I think, move on to Galt Lake. But they are not only follies and absurdities, but terrible inconsistencies, which makes them tenfold more childish. The Major and I discussed the subject—not the ladies' dress, but absurdities in general, and agreed in our apprehension concerning them. I am aware that it is very possible to carry rationality to an irrational extreme, but notwithstanding, I must confess myself to be still on the foolish side of the right medium. I am afraid women deteriorate more in this country than the other sex. As long as the lady is necessarily the most active member of her household, she keeps her ground from her utility; but when the state of semi-civilisation arrives, and the delicacies of her table, and the elegancies of her person become her chief concern and pride, then she must fall, and must be contented to be looked upon as belonging merely to the decorative department of the establishment, and valued accordingly. The gentlemen dined with us after bringing us home. We were glad to have the Major's counsel respecting the stray horses. Though we had three men in the woods to-day (being the only day on which there was a chance of mustering so many), and their visible tracks were seen, yet these men came home at an early hour without them. I very strongly suspect there had been disunion in the band, and probably the two who are to go to-morrow may accomplish more. My mother is a little tired to-night, but I think not altogether with her bodily exertions, but in part with talking and listening more than usual. She heard Mr. Fidler much better than she expected, and was much pleased with him, indeed,

he gave us a very good sermon to-day. I shall be anxious to learn the result of the collection,—it is to be repeated every quarter. My mother, though the advocate of good dressing, does not defend a wreath of tiny roses ornamenting the inside of Mrs. Fidler's white-silk bonnet. She thought that I looked much more like the parson's wife. Poor Miss Fidler was a contrast to her pretty step-mother, being very homely and forlorn in her appearance. I warned you I should write a womanish journal!

*Monday, June 15.*—A windy, comfortless day; "nice and cool," said my mother—"very cold," said Aunt Alice and I. We have all enjoyed a fire, however. My mother and Aunt Alice were still busy in the garden, this time, however, amongst the flowers. I deserted, but was not idle within doors.

*Tuesday, June 16.*—Was greeted the first thing this morning with bad news. A two-year-old steer was found dead. Suspicion fell upon Mr. Toker's horses, which seem to bring us nothing but ill-luck. There were marks of violence about the animal, but for want of witnesses the evidence was inconclusive, and the jury did not give a unanimous verdict. Unhappily there was no surgeon of any eminence at hand, and the post-mortem examination elicited nothing satisfactory. The coroner's verdict therefore was "found dead," and the remains of the unfortunate animal were committed to the soap tub instead of to the pickle tub. When that matter was settled I had the *Fairy* put into the water again, it being now calm, in hopes that she may staunch in a few days, perhaps before next Sunday. In the afternoon we had the great satisfaction of seeing the men return with each a horse. I must say I had begun to be very despairing, and visions of falling trees and legs broken in swamps, wolves, etc., rose before me.

Great was the general joy at this reappearance, but as it subsided, my mother observed that it was not proportioned to our concern at their absence. This reminded me of a sermon of Mr. Mayow's on the unsatisfying nature of earthly possessions, when he illustrated part of his subject by this very circumstance—"a man that has two horses is not therefore a happy man, but if he comes to lose them he is immediately an unhappy man."

The weather has been still moderate, and the garden continues to benefit, and if air and exercise do good, we too. The flower that has been contemplated with most delight this season was a little daisy, which has unaccountably found its way on to our grass plot. We had none of us seen one for years, and it was greeted by all, in parlour and kitchen, as an old friend.

*Wednesday, June 17.*—I have nothing worthy of notice for you to-day—you will be tired of the mention of the garden. In the afternoon I made a little preparation for the making of my mousline-de-laine. I felt a little perplexed, being anxious to do it justice, and murmured a wish that I had known you were going to send it me in time to ask you to put it into Miss Callwood's hands, who, I hope, retains my pattern. It will be exceedingly pretty, and I happen to have some ribbon, which has failed to match another dress, and suits this exactly.

*Thursday, June 18.*—I noted down in my other journal the various doings on the farm for John's information to-day. The men were at a "Bee" of Jordan's, the result of which is the logging of five acres. Jordan is a very thriving man. His family are all come to working years, and he makes them work. His daughter Sally is a great "belle" and much looked after by the young farmers about. I quite dread losing

her from the neighbourhood, as she has often helped us in our needs. My mother and aunt spent a great part of the day in John's house. I was more selfishly engaged with my dressmaking.

*Friday, June 19.*—My mother still lives out of doors. Winds, something like our Bootle winds, keep off the mosquitos. We have lost five out of our seven ducklings to-day, which some of us take much to heart. John's cat is suspected to be the offender.

*Saturday, June 20.*—We had been wishing to go up to the Falls all this week for my mother to make her calls upon all the new-comers. Our boat was sufficiently staunch, but the winds were too high. This morning, after many deliberations, we decided to go. We took an early dinner, and started between two and three. We first walked up to Mr. Wallis', and there had the pleasure of dropping our cards for the first time since we came to the backwoods. Mr. and Mrs. Wallis had gone down to Peterboro early this morning, to remain away about a fortnight. Painting, etc., appears to be going forward, so the bride means to polish up the bachelor's mansion. When they return they will be accompanied by some of Mrs. Wallis' Kingston friends. Mr. and Mrs. Fraser had come up in style this morning, pulled by four gentlemen from below, but when we reached the Falls they had gone on to Camerons Lake. We heard they intended visiting Blythe on their return, but their other visits had taken up too much time, for we saw them go down the lake about eight o'clock.

After leaving Mr. Wallis' we called on Mrs. Fidler and Mrs. Hoare, and accepted the offer of a cup of tea from the last-named lady. Mr. Hoare went for Mrs. Fidler to join us, and we spent a sociable afternoon, being in our boat again, I think, before six. Mr.

Hoare took my mother into his garden, and Mrs. Hoare took me into her dairy, etc., etc. We got a present of a cowslip. I mentioned our little daisy. Mrs. Fidler did not even know what a daisy was! Strange! but stranger still! Mrs. Hoare, an Englishwoman, has been five or six years in this country, and had never found out that there are no daisies in it. The two elder ladies are a little overdone to-night with their exertions. The weather is becoming hot again.

*Sunday, June 21.*—The two elder ladies did not feel up to another expedition on the lake. I prepared for it, but some indications of storm deterred me from venturing; and it was very well, for some heavy showers would have ill suited my Sunday bonnet. It has not, however, rained half enough for the garden.

*Monday, June 22.*—High wind again. We have been preserving near a quart of strawberries to-day, such fine strawberries! I do verily believe they are somewhat larger than the very largest pin-head you ever saw. I am glad to tell you that Taylor is come to resume his work again!

*Wednesday, June 24.*—The events of yesterday were not worth recording. The breakfast table this morning was ornamented with flowers and a cake in honour of me! I number to-day one more year, and get on very fast towards the awful age of forty! I can scarcely fancy myself within four years of it. We had a visit from Mr. Boyd to-day, who was going a round to collect men for a "Bee" next week. These "Bees" are far too frequent. John has never had but the one of last year, and I wish he had not had that one, so that I might be sweeping in my condemnation of them. We are in alarm about John's beautiful cat, who has not been seen these two days. William will understand a little what the loss of a pet animal is. You

cannot either of you, however, rightly know how John values his cat, the companion of his solitary home, for the dogs give the preference to the house where there is a kitchen. Puss would follow him about like a dog, and was one of the oldest animals about the place. I cannot think what happens to the cats.

*Saturday, June 27.*—I might have spared you this lament, for puss has turned up. However, such little troubles and alarms are characteristic, and the mention of them may help you to remember our peculiarities. On Thursday afternoon John got home, after the longest absence he has ever made from us. We were very glad to see him again, though we had been well pleased to see him depart. He seems to have seen some agreeable people, and extended his acquaintance a little. When once he has a good wife by his side I shall not care about his seeing the world, any more than I care about myself seeing it. But whilst his choice is still unmade I must say I wish for him a more extensive field of observation than our own circle affords. One result of his journey is that we are to have a bride and bridegroom as our guests next week—not, however, any of his new acquaintance. The gentleman, who resides at Coburg, I have often heard of, but never seen. He is coming up on business, and brings his newly-married wife with him. Mr. and Mrs. Bolton are middle-aged people, and have each been married before. I am sorry you have had any anxiety respecting the execution of our commissions—I have no misgivings about them. If you knew how difficult it is to get good things here, even in our metropolis! you would understand how thankful we are to you for undertaking to satisfy our wants from home. We are perhaps sometimes vague in our directions—often, I believe, purposely, in order to leave you at liberty to be guided by circum-



stances. I remembered mentioning in a former letter, but I ought to have repeated it in giving the order, that my mother wanted the Dutch dolls, thinking she might perhaps dress a squaw, with her family about her, for which reason they were to be of different sizes. I am annoyed at my own carelessness in omitting to state the dimensions of the picture frame, so poor Rome must live in its dark home another twelve months. I must tell you that I have finished my dress, and that it fits very well. John reports of Mr. Atthill's lady that she is a "nice little girl," rather much of a child. She is of the smallest dimensions, a perfect Fenella. We have ascertained that our goods are still up at Port Hope. A further effort to get them here has proved ineffectual. We have rain at last, which will be very refreshing. I must close my journal for the post, although it is not yet the last day of the month.

In a letter dated July 15, 1840, my grandmother laments the unfortunate change in the fortunes of the Stansfields (her niece married Mr. Stansfield), owing to Mr. Stansfield's speculations. The family had apparently made a home in Jersey. The long-expected package had arrived from Port Hope, but another was due, and still not forthcoming. Some dahlias sent had, unfortunately, perished on the journey. The garden had done well during this year—beans were failures always, but French beans, tomatos, vegetable marrow, carrots, turnips, asparagus, onions, etc., all flourished, and the newly-planted strawberries gave promise of well-doing. "Mary" (Scarry) still talked of joining her husband in Ireland, and if she carried out her intention would be a great loss. My grandmother did much house-maiding herself, brushing and dusting, and had been gratified by an exclamation of Mr. Atthill's, "all looks

so tidy!" The visit of Mr. Bolton and his bride had gone off very well. Mrs. Bolton was a handsome American lady, about thirty-eight or forty, and confided the story of her matrimonial affairs. Mr. Bolton had proposed to her during a seven-years' engagement to her first husband, who died after three years of married life; and when Mr. Bolton's first wife died opportunely ten years after, she accepted his second offer. It was hoped that Mr. Bolton might be of some service in using his influence, as a county member, with regard to a proposed road; hence the invitation.

EXTRACTS from a LETTER of my GRANDMOTHER'S,  
dated August 14, 1840.

"I claim to be first on the sheet to congratulate you and dear Margaret on the birth of your little boy, the intelligence of which reached us on August 2.<sup>1</sup> . . . Thank you for the intention of adding my family name, but it is now become extinct, and it is well to let it rest and be forgotten. I was much interested with the account of how the little girls received the new arrival. I wonder Alice was not more delighted with the novelty of a brother, but I doubt not he will grow much in favour. Ellen's "I love it!" was very pretty, and came from the heart and feeling. I am busy with my flower beds, which are now gay—the early frosts we sometimes have threaten the tomatos. . . . I have ventured to church the last two Sundays, as the days were cooler. The boat tires me more than the hill up to the church. Your Aunt Alice surprised me this morning by preparing herself to accompany John to the Falls. We have felt the want of some common crockery ware, and she was determined to see what the

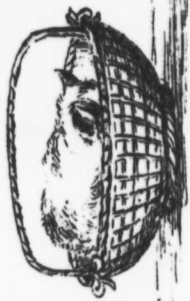
<sup>1</sup> Henry Currer Langton, born June 23, 1840; died Nov. 25, 1902.

Store contained. Her return reminded me of what your dear father used to say—that he knew when Miss Curren had been in town by the number of little parcels in the Boot" (of the carriage).

EXTRACTS from my AUNT ANNE'S LETTER,  
dated August 14, 1840.

After adding her congratulations on the birth of a nephew, and commenting on some family events, one of which was the birth of a grandson to her uncle, Zachary Langton, the letter records some additions to the journal of June.

"The operations on the new room are suspended in consequence of our finding it desirable to lath and plaster the wash-house, with the rooms above it. This was a frame building, and the outer shell was at one time deemed sufficient, but on various accounts we have now judged otherwise. The outside of these buildings must also be painted, for their preservation. . . . I have this week commenced the piece of worsted-work we brought out, and have finished the spread eagle. If I proceed diligently it will form quite a variety in my next month's diary. To sit at an embroidery frame is a contrast to my frame of dip candles. Thank you for the information you got for me. Part of it will be useful, but the plan of dipping by means of a pulley is scarcely applicable to my small scale of operations. More frequently I have a very small quantity of tallow, so that a box to admit six or seven candles is all I can well afford, as I have no means of keeping up the temperature but by replenishing from the fire. A small stick with six candles on it can be dipped by the hand as easily as any other way. What I have



*Puss asleep in Aunt Curren's work basket.*

gained from your enquiries is that I ought to raise them from the tallow more slowly than I have been accustomed to do. . . .

"I have sent a contribution to the nursery album (puss asleep in Aunt Currer's work-basket). The original is often placed in the centre of our table to divert us with its gambols, and often takes possession of the little basket. It provokingly turned itself round and sought a new position just when I had made a commencement of its portrait."

BLYTHE, September 1840.

Once more I have folded my large sheet to complete my series of journals. September opens with a busy household day, the details of which are commonplace and uninteresting, so I will devote the space allotted to it to telling you what we have recently been about. There have been two events since the departure of our last letter. The first an expedition to Balsam Lake, the party consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, Mr. Hamilton and his mother, John and I, and two Mr. Dundases, the one having a brother visiting him at present. We went in canoes, the rapid being practicable only for this craft. One of the objects of the expedition was a visit to Admiral Vansittart and his wife, now resident for the season on Balsam Lake, but this was unhappily frustrated by a thunderstorm, which occurred in the middle of the day, and detained us under cover of the woods until it was too late. The time, however, was not unpleasantly spent, the formation of a camp with canoes and blankets on poles, the fire-lighting and pot-boiling, having all novelty to recommend them. After consuming our prog very snugly, notwithstanding the storm, we were favoured

with a beautiful afternoon, and enabled to ascend the rapids, and take a peep at the lake, though we could not proceed much further. The day was voted a very pleasant one, and we reached the Falls again about sunset, where John and I remained until the following morning.

The second event was our having Mr. and Mrs. Wallis to dinner. We had them by themselves—not intentionally, however; the friends that should have met them disappointed us. There is a third circumstance worth recording too. We had, the other night, a very fine arch of the aurora borealis spanning the heavens, from about east and west, but something to the south of both these points. It was very bright and very broad, and had all the appearance of being very near, being considerably narrower towards each horizon than in its zenith. After this had faded away we had a pretty display of aurora in its more ordinary style. The weather is still extremely unsettled.

*Wednesday, September 2.*—This day having been very like yesterday, I will pass over the present, and give you a little future. I do not know whether it was the pleasure of the day at Balsam Lake or not that put it into the heads of people to wish for something similar again in another quarter, but a little picnic has been resolved upon for the tenth of this month, to take place at Sturgeon point, and a couple of boat races are to form the excuse for a meeting. But it is on no account to bear the name of a regatta. There will be no company invited, no preparations made, excepting alone the pitching of the marquee, where we shall each take our little basket of provisions.

I think I wish there were some other locality equally suitable. I feel as if the ghost of poor James Witherup would overshadow us. That fatal day and the opening

of the railway<sup>1</sup> occupy the same place in my recollection, though certainly poor James and the member for Liverpool were two very different people. We must hope the weather will settle before that time. A storm of wind, reminding us of Bootle, now promises us a change, and I fully expect to see a fire on the hearth to-morrow.

*Thursday, September 3.*—The event of the day has been the receipt of English letters, your one of July 24, one from Mrs. J. Langton, and one from Rosalie.<sup>2</sup> We rejoiced exceedingly at the good accounts of you all, and the prosperity of your nursery. The second source of satisfaction in your letter was the ten pounds for Fenelon Falls church, which comes most opportunely for the advancing of the parsonage, to which we feel no hesitation in applying it. The building has caused some unpleasant feelings lately, and harmony seemed to be impaired. Mr. Wallis, as resident, was to have been the acting trustee, but he has given himself too little trouble concerning it, the consequence being that Mr. Fidler has assumed too much the direction of the work-people. Mr. Wallis, too, appears to have been not sufficiently firm and explicit as to what could and what could not be done, and Mr. Fidler has indulged in some whims and extravagances, which have made the expenses run up much faster than they should have done. Now consequently, when the funds are exhausted, the house is still extremely incomplete. As it is manifestly in a great measure Mr. Fidler's fault that the sums subscribed and advanced have been insufficient to finish the

<sup>1</sup> William Huskisson, M.P. for Liverpool from 1823 to 1830, was fatally injured by an accident on the occasion of the opening of the Manchester and Liverpool Railway, September 15, and expired in a few hours at the Vicarage, Eccles, to which place he was taken.

<sup>2</sup> Rosalie Morel, A. L.'s early friend at Yverdon. The two friends continued to correspond into old age, but never met again.

building, it is only fair that he should bear the extra expense, especially as he enjoys from the Society and the trustees an income of £180 a year currency, and is as competent as almost any of his parishioners to disburse a little on the occasion. This ten pounds will be a great lift, and the unknown but suspected donor has our gratitude.

*Sunday, September 6.*—Friday and Saturday have been omitted. They present nothing worthy of note. If I say anything about them I may tell you that we have cleared out a room or two for the plasterers. We have now the pleasure of work-people both inside and outside of the house. The painter is at work on our exterior, and we are greatly lamenting that we have not also our carpenter about us. The finishing of a house is an endless job in this country, where work goes on for a few days, and then sowing, or reaping, or logging, or some other farming operation puts a stop to it again for a time. A great part of yesterday was most profitably spent in taking out some two or three evenings' work from my canvas, during which time I often thought of the threads I cut in performing a similar operation on your work, but no such calamity occurred. You may generally imagine me in an evening with my frame before me, as I am just now very straight with common making and mending. My needle being thus at liberty has induced me to commence my great undertaking.<sup>1</sup> I give it occasionally an hour or two of daylight. I have two afternoons more than usual at my command in this week, the harvest having made my scholars so irregular that I dismissed them till it was over, and I think I shall prolong my holiday until after the potato raising, when their attendance will be quite as bad. My present

<sup>1</sup> The seat and back of a chair.



children are all sufficiently advanced not to fall back in the interval. I fancy I shall take on a few young ones in the winter, and recommence with A B C. Mr. Atthill's return to England has been delayed. Mr. Toker is just arrived out again, and I hear is in a great hurry to begin building, so I suppose his wedding will take place before very long. To-day we were all at church; the weather is most beautiful. I often wish in bad or doubtful weather that our church were nearer to us, but on such a morning as this I should regret the pleasant sail there and back. We had some Peterboro ladies at church (visitors of Mrs. Dennistoun's), who made it look very gay, and exhibited to us some, I should fancy, very extreme fashions. The Mayor returned with us to dinner.

*Monday, September 7.*—As the garden formed a prominent topic of the last journal, you will like to hear it named again. There is little doing in it at present. The next operation, I suppose, will be the preparation of it for winter repose. Though it did not promise very well early in the year, it has afforded us an ample supply of some vegetables. We have a few most excellent melons, and one or two water-melons. Tomatos are just ripening, but the curiosity of the garden is a vegetable-marrow plant, which occupies a very large portion of it, and if its shoots had been trained to extend, instead of bending them inwardly again, it might pretty nearly have stretched itself over the whole. The fruit upon it is abundant, but early frosts prevent much of it coming to perfection. What does reach perfection is a great size. One specimen, which we have been cutting at for nearly a week, weighed twenty pounds. It is, moreover, a very good kind, and one which will keep sometime on into the winter. The subject of the garden leads me to the gardener. We

have lost our boy. Insubordination had been latterly added to idleness, and one day a distinct refusal to execute an order led to a prompt dismissal. We are on the look-out for another. It is much if we find one his equal in capability, but perhaps one of inferior capacity may prove more manageable.

*Tuesday, September 8.*—This is the last day of the plasterers, and as usual the plot thickens as we advance. A hearthstone here, and a chimney there, requiring a touch of the trowel, has by degrees introduced them into nearly every room in the house.

*Wednesday, September 9.*—A busy day. Some cooking preparations for to-morrow, and, moreover, putting the house to rights after a pair of as dirty plasterers as ever mixed mortar. A strong south wind, continuing to blow for the third day, promises but very ill for the weather to-morrow, the day of our picnic. However, a thunderstorm this evening may be perhaps the crisis, and we may yet have a fine day. John and Mr. Dundas have been at Sturgeon point pitching the marquee, and we ladies have been doing our part by the following preparations:—two roast fowls, two roast wild ducks, a chicken, a piece of ham, a cranberry tart, two moulds of boiled rice with cranberry jelly, a bun loaf, bread, melons, etc., all most beautifully packed in a tin box. The arrival of your first package at Whitby is announced to us to-day. We have also another piece of agreeable intelligence,—postage is at length reduced to us poor colonists by Halifax, the price of a letter will be about elevenpence halfpenny, and we may send one that way for twopence halfpenny.

*Thursday, September 10.*—The sun shone very brightly upon us this morning, but the clouds still indicated doubtful weather, so we prepared ourselves against

showers. John started early, whilst I waited, and was taken up by the boatful of ladies from Camerons Lake. We went down, twelve of us, in a new six-oared boat of Mr. Wallis'; he and his wife are away at Toronto. The Fidlers did not come, because they are on the move to the parsonage, and the Frasers failed because the lake was too rough for a very small boat. The rest of the lake-dwellers assembled, twenty-eight in number. The day went off well, but not exactly as was intended. The races, which were always secondary concerns, did not come off at all, some of the expected boats having failed to attend, and those attending not affording good matches. So the *Alice* performed a *pas seul* for our amusement, and beautifully she acquitted herself. Mr. Dundas' brother, a sailor by profession, took the helm, Mr. Dundas and John being the crew. The *Alice* sported all her sails and all her flags, and the wind being very high at the time, she appeared to the greatest possible advantage as she shot across the lake before us, exciting general admiration. John only regrets that he was not on shore to see her. When this sport was over another very important occupation commenced, namely, that of spreading and consuming our repast. I shall not give you the contents of the other prog baskets, as I did of our own, suffice it to say that there was a plentiful supply of all our backwoods delicacies, which were duly enjoyed. Meanwhile there had been two or three showers, and we thought of finishing with a dance under the marquee, John being equal to a set of quadrilles on the bugle; but the accumulation of thick clouds led Mrs. Hamilton to be anxious to return, so the party began to disperse, and I was housed long before sunset. I thought the day a very pleasant one. I knew every one, and talked to every one, saving and excepting the two Peterboro

ladies of Mrs. Dennistoun's party, to whom neither, I believe, did any other lady speak. They must have annoyed their hostess considerably. They were self-invited guests, and conducted themselves so strangely that I am sure they will meet with no encouragement to repeat their visit to the Back Lakes, where we are an orderly, respectable set of people. John waited to collect our multifarious property, and reached home somewhat late. However, after comparing notes, and relating the adventures of the day, I have still had time to record them in the pages of my journal.

*Sunday, September 13.*—Friday and Saturday have again been allowed to pass over without a line. Mr. Need called here on the former day on his road down from the Falls, where he had pulled up some of the ladies, and John accompanied him down the lake to attend, first, a party given by him to the gentry at his end, and afterwards to proceed to Peterboro. Soon after he had gone we were made to feel very anxious by rather an alarming account of John Menzies, who had been the man in attendance on the marquee on Thursday, and then apparently quite well. Castor-oil, barley-water, sago, gruel, and chicken broth were the doses prescribed by the learned physician at Blythe, and I am happy to say this treatment has proved successful, or rather, I am thankful to say he is in a fair way of recovery. The weather was so cold both Friday and Saturday that we felt more perfectly satisfied with that we enjoyed on Thursday, notwithstanding its showers. To-day is again beautiful, but there was no going to church, as Mr. Fidler is away to-day, officiating for Mr. Wade at Peterboro. Mary went over the lake to see her friends, so we were quite without domestics. She has just come home, and the result of her visit appears to be that she gives up going to Ireland until next spring.

I thought as much, for the opposition made by her father and mother to her return is very strong, and I think very selfish. However, we shall in consequence not have a change of servant for another six months, I suppose, which is very well, for though she may not be everything we would wish, we know each other. The former rumours which reflected upon her appear to have died away, and I would hope there was less ground for them than was imagined. Whilst managing the kitchen fire I had a meditation on the perversity of human nature. In England the servants are always crying out for chips. Here they accumulate in the wood-yard to a most inconvenient extent, and you cannot get the servants to make use of them. They are good solid chips, that are made in chopping, and they make a most beautiful fire. Though they do burn away fast, yet a large boxful may be gathered in five minutes from the little mountain of them that rises under the axe. But as long as there is a pile of cut wood they burn it by armsful, without any help from the beautiful store of chips, which have to be carted away from time to time. Last year we burnt it where it stood, but the fire was scarcely quite extinguished in a month's time, and required constant watchfulness. Often, if there was a little wind, a bucket of water had to be carried out at night to prevent the embers kindling up again. An unusual incident has occurred this evening, which I must record. An enclosure with notes of invitation has been delivered to us. The Dunsfords ask us for the twenty-third, and to stay a few days. Part of the family will accept, and for part of the time.

*Friday, September 18.*—I did not like to waste paper upon very uninteresting days, especially as I recollect in my last journal the sheet was full before

the month was out, so I wrote nothing in the earlier part of the week. My mother was chiefly occupied in tying up her vines, and restoring order after the painter's operations, though he is quite one of the tidier sort of workmen. I looked over my wardrobe and fashionised a dinner-dress,—the first time I have wanted one since I wore colours. My Aunt Alice's two charges, the poultry yard and John's wardrobe, have been suffering depredations, the one from a hawk, the other I believe from chip-munks,—most voracious little animals, with a great taste for woollens, especially red flannel shirts. Yesterday brought John home, with, I am sorry to say, a cold, which he is nursing to-day. The weather has become somewhat sharp, and at the lower end of the lake, I hear, the gardens are almost destroyed by frost. We have suffered very little as yet. We had another wedding announced to us yesterday—our neighbour Sally Jordan has given all her old lovers the slip, and is to be united on Monday to a young man who only came out this summer. We shall miss her very much. There is no other person near us who can come and lend us a helping hand on every occasion, so I cannot but lament the circumstance on our own account, and I have a good excuse for not rejoicing, as people say this match is made by her father and not by herself. This will be the second wedding at Fenelon Falls. There is a great assemblage of company at that celebrated place at present. The Wallises have a party in the house, the Fidlers likewise, and the people on Camerons Lake have also company. I expect the church will scarcely hold us all on Sunday. I told you of the depredations here. I have just been in the kitchen, where I hear that Jordan had a six-months' old calf worried by wolves last night. I hope they will not fall in love

with John's beautiful little bull, now about three months old.

*Sunday, September 20.*—I am afraid this will be a very dull journal—nothing of any great interest occurs. Yesterday we received the magnificent present of two hind-quarters of mutton from Jordan, and to-day came a few apples from Mr. Fidler. Last year we had a present of half a dozen from the same quarter. Things vary in value in different situations. These six were the only ones we saw during the season. We had some deliberations how they should be turned to the best account, and decided upon making some mince meat. We happened to have no company at that time, and then warm weather came, when it was not appropriate, so there the mince meat is yet, and as good as ever, waiting for a fitting season to be produced. To-day we have not been to church. The weather has been very cold and boisterous, and John's cough still requires a little nursing. This is quite the coldest September of the four we have seen in this land. We have had fires pretty constantly, and we have small chance now of anything warm and pleasant for at least six months. However, it may be cold and pleasant. We have been again our own domestics to-day, having spared Mary to go and see her mother, who is unwell. Whilst the wind continues as it is she will not be able to cross the lake, so we have good reason to wish for a change. We have got an ague patient in the neighbourhood—the first since we came. It is to be doubted whether the rising of the water, owing to the works at Bobcaygeon, will not render our lake less healthy. It spoils its beauty in many parts. The trees dying on the low ground near its margin, the pretty point which terminates our bay is greatly injured, and the landing for part of the year is very

bad. Our talked-of dock has not been accomplished this season, and when it will be it is impossible to guess. The work is impossible till about June, when the waters have subsided; but then comes hay time, and harvest, and by the time the last is well over the water is rising again.

*Monday, September 21.*—Winter seems quite to have overtaken us, we have a little snow along with a very cold wind. Mary was five hours in getting over the lake to us. She brought a boy with her, whom, at any rate for a time, we shall engage. He is about the right age, and has a pleasant countenance, so perhaps he may suit us, which will be very well, as it is high time we should be provided with a wood-chopper. John has been gathering all the remaining fruit in the garden, as most likely to-night frost will make an end of everything. The day has been a busy one. We have cleared out the drawing-room for the painter, having resolved to finish off this one room. The book-cases and other wood-work are to be light oak, which will have very much the same hue that we have been accustomed to, as pine after two or three winters' smoke is not very white. We have purchased a quarter of beef to-day, so there is work cut out for to-morrow.

*Tuesday, September 22.*—Another busy day. Besides the disposal of our beef there was tomato ketchup to make, and melons to preserve, by way of making the most of the last fruits of this year's gardening. We weighed up vegetable marrow from one plant to 207 lbs., besides some that were left and spoiled, and another plant has produced upwards of 100 lbs. weight. John is busy collecting the flower seeds. Almost every kind will have ripened sufficiently to give us a successor of its bounties for next year. The weather is again very fine, and no longer very cold. I hope it



may continue favourable for our journey down the lake to-morrow.

*Friday, September 25.*—We had a beautiful day on Wednesday, and a pleasant sail down the lake to Mr. Dunsford's. This was the first time I had been to the house. It is a very good one, proportioned in all its dimensions to the size of the family, and the situation of it is about the best on the lake. A slight sketch I have taken, which you will get some day or other, will give you some idea of that end of the lake, which is decidedly superior to ours. Our party was to have been more numerous, but they had had disappointments, and it consisted only of our two selves, and three or four of the gentlemen of that end of the lake. However, the family party alone is so large that with these few additions to it only we mustered a very good dance in the evening. The quadrilles were varied by songs, duets on the harp and piano, etc. I am sorry to say on reaching home this afternoon we found my mother an invalid, threatened with a bilious attack. However, she is comfortably asleep now, and I hope to find her better in the morning. I have perhaps not been very wise in letting Mary go home again immediately on my return, but they were exceedingly anxious to have her assistance at a "Bee," and I did not wish to be selfish and deprive them of it. Thursday was a brilliant day, and it was proposed that we should go down to Bobcaygeon, of which I was very glad. It is decidedly the most picturesque spot on the lakes, but its wood and water are not easily represented.

They should have more skilful treatment than mine. However, I made one or two slight attempts. Mr. Need gave us a little luncheon on the rocks. He has been building himself a house this summer, which has been named by some one or other the Lady-trap, greatly

to Mrs. Dunsford's horror, who cannot see it as a joke, but thinks it quite shocking!

The Dunsfords were all very civil and attentive, and seemed very anxious that I should enjoy my visit, which I did, though not grievously lamenting that such days will be few and far between. The second evening passed much as the first—a little more music, and a little less dancing—and we departed soon after breakfast this morning. John had to see Mr. Boyd on our way up, so I walked there with him, thus having another opportunity of seeing a backwoods bachelor's house. We also called on the Frasers. Mr. Fraser secludes his nice little wife far too much. They rarely accept an invitation, and if they do they never keep their engagement. We ought to consider ourselves flattered by the exception made in our favour on the occasion of the two regattas. The weather continues magnificent, warm as midsummer, until towards evening, when we can begin to divine the time of year.

*Saturday, September 26.*—I am going to bring my sheet to a conclusion to-day, that my journal may be despatched by to-morrow's post. I am happy to report that my mother is something better. To-morrow, I hope, we shall be favoured with her company downstairs again. Mary's absence has made me better acquainted with our new boy, and more able to form an estimate of his capabilities. He seems very willing and obliging, but not half so bright as his predecessor. However, he may improve. At present he is nervous, and reminds me of old Samuel at the Bank.

*Sunday, September 27.*—My mother continues better. We have stormy weather again—a curious climate.

In a letter dated October 24 the arrival of the package number two early in the month is announced,

but there were still no tidings of package number one. The contents of number two were not damaged, but the paper bags containing sago had burst, and the sago had to be collected from among the other goods. The presents of carpets, hearth-rugs, cord, and twine are mentioned as specially acceptable. The writer says :—

“ The wood fires make sad work with hearth-rugs, and indeed the burning goes beyond them, notwithstanding our fenders. Mr. Wallis said last winter that he found all his table-cloths were full of holes from the wood flying. Our dinner table has not quite escaped, though I fancy placed more distant from the fire than his has been. The servants here are reckless about wood. They are accustomed in their own shanties to one large room, with a chimney of immense dimensions, which they fill with logs. Our carpenter described his usual fire in winter to consist of the back log, a foot in diameter, and one upon that little less in size, and three others in front, with some split pieces. The quantity of wood we consume is ruinous, and often inconvenient to John to spare the men to bring it up. We shall now very soon be making up our winter pile. We have had some beautiful weather, but to-day it is blowing a storm. Our painting has been a tedious piece of work, and expensive, but it is well done. The parlour was all that was done inside, window frames excepted. The new room is finished, all but putting in the furniture. It will be very useful to us for visitors, and for John sometimes. It will be a relief to Anne and myself not to have to vacate our rooms for our guests.”

A letter dated November 15 announces the arrival at last of package number “one,” which had been unaccountably delayed on the way. The contents had

not been very successfully packed, and the pots of preserves, which had only paper on the top, had damaged some of the reviews, magazines, and books. Some of the other things, handkerchiefs and stuffs, had also come in for a share of the moisture. The amount of rough usage on the voyage and land journey was not realised by the senders. The candles were specially welcome. The letter records the marriage of Mr. Toker to Miss Rubridge, and that they had settled in the house that Mr. Atthill had inhabited before leaving for England. A new road was in process of making, which would render communication with Bobcaygeon and the lower end of the lake much easier. The writer continues:—

“We are not quite ready for winter yet. Some of our fences are yet incomplete, and John is putting up a new building—a workshop, a most desirable addition to the premises. Our present joiner’s shop would not do for that purpose, as it would prevent our claiming the benefit of our insurance in case of any accident. Such a building must be, according to regulation, at least 66 ft. from the house and out-buildings. Ours will be about 80 ft.

“It is immediately behind the house, but unfortunately, from the great rise in the ground, must be conspicuous. It is to be of dimensions that will allow of boats, carts, etc., being manufactured or repaired in it, and will enable men to be profitably occupied in wet weather. Our new room is finished, but we have had so many hindrances lately that it is not yet furnished. I do not know whether we told you that these townships have been recently embodied into a militia regiment, of which Mr. Fraser is Colonel and Mr. Wallis Major. John is one of the Captains. He mustered his Company the

other day for the first time, but only to collect their subscriptions towards the re-erection of General Brock's monument.<sup>1</sup> A rate according to rank was to be asked, but not required, of all militia men. John's party came forward very readily—I think they are thirty-six in number. Mr. Hamilton is his lieutenant, and he has some old soldiers for his subordinate officers. Some of John's commissions will concern his costume *à la militaire*, as the officers are expected to have the undress uniform. We shall send our orders early, that the things may come by the first spring ships—otherwise they are thrown too late in the season."

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, a distinguished officer in the British army. His services in the war of 1812 in America were recognised by his country.

1841

EXTRACTS from LETTER of January 1, 1841.

"WE have been putting the finishing stroke to our new room, getting all its furniture into it, and setting it out in complete order. I assure you we bestow no little admiration upon it. It is spacious, commodious, and cheerful-looking. My mother has sometimes contemplated occupying this new room herself. It is most conveniently situated for the mistress of the family, and in rather too close contact with the kitchen department for the visitors in the house, but still there are a few reasons that will prevent our making the change at present. We should not like to occupy a different floor from Aunt Alice, as she is occasionally unwell, and, moreover, we are so comfortable where we are that we could scarcely change for the better. The house is certainly now a very warm one; our room is a totally different thing to what it was before the house was plastered. In time we shall save up the expense of that operation by the reduced consumption of fire-wood. We got so well beforehand with fire-wood last year that I expect we shall burn dry wood all this winter. On Christmas eve the mercury of our thermometer had disappeared into the ball, or rather it was on Christmas Day in the morning. However, it was bright and calm, and, well cloaked up, I found my drive to church quite

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pleasant. John, who could not put his fingers within a muff, had to keep thumping first one hand and then the other all the way. Our Christmas Day party is now greatly reduced. The married men, of course, no longer belong to it, and Mr. Dennistoun entertains his own clan, which includes all Camerons Lake. Mr. Need, Mr. Boyd, Mr. Jones, and Mr. M'Laren were all our guests. The Wallises are gone away, I believe, for two or three months, and indeed almost all the families are making a trip about this time to the Front. John and I dined with the Wallises a few days before they left. Mrs. Hamilton and her son were there also, and Mrs. Hoare came in the evening. We formed two whist tables, one of good players and one of bad. My experience in the game is a little increasing. Mr. Need and Mr. M'Laren are both fond of a rubber, and when either of them dine with us I am generally called upon to take a hand, as my mother declines, and I am complimented on my improvement. On Christmas day we had a card table, a backgammon table, and a chess table,—the first time I have played chess since I came out. There are a few things still to do for the house. The chief one is the manufacture of an ice-house, a most desirable thing in this country, as it is the only chance of having occasionally fresh meat in summer time. At this season we are well supplied, and we have lately been laying in summer supplies. Besides pork barrels we have now six sides of bacon and thirteen hams decorating our kitchen ceiling.

“It is an easy transition from the housekeeping to the household, and that most important of all topics here—the domestics. We have at present a young woman who has lived with two or three different families in this neighbourhood, and has the character of being an “excellent servant,” which means here one that will

do your bidding. Our former Mary (Scarry), this is a Mary too, was very much disposed to take the command sometimes out of one's hands. Her husband has not yet sent over the money to enable her to return to him in Ireland. I am sorry to say that her brother Dan has got possession of her wages, and though she has a promissory note for repayment, I think it very uncertain when she may get it, for, notwithstanding her spirit, she is rather soft towards her own family. Our other servant is a boy of about thirteen, decidedly very clever. He has learnt his house duties very well, and at present always waits at table. He keeps us very well supplied with wood too, and looks very properly after his pigs and his poultry. Moreover, he is very civil and obliging in manner, and therefore suits us well. I hope he may continue to do so. The new workshop at the top of the hill is now finished, and, contrary to our expectation, is no eye-sore, but rather the contrary, as it is a most respectable building, and adds importance to the appearance of the place. The flag-staff now surmounts it instead of the house. The old joiner's shop we purpose converting into a room for John, and the room above it for his bed-room. The old house is getting very crazy and cold, and he will be glad to make the change before next winter. His bachelor visitors will be as easily accommodated there as in his present dwelling.

A. L."

JOURNAL, February 1841.

*Monday, February 1.*—I see but a poor prospect of anything interesting in the pages of this journal. As you will have received letters lately, I will omit the retrospective sketch with which I generally have commenced my journals, but I cannot spare you my



accustomed introductory chapter on the weather. The month opened rather sharply, at least so a zero frost is felt after the uncommonly mild weather we have had during almost the whole of January. Yesterday we drove up to church in bright sunshine and no frost, and at night we sat the fire out, so that the mercury made a most rapid descent in the course of the night. I hope it will now remain down a little, for, on the whole, it suits everything much better than the soft weather we have lately had. John is to be a traveller to-morrow. He and his lieutenant are going into Eldon to make up their Company.

I have not the least doubt that in John's letter you will have had some particulars of his present military movements. I do not much like the idea of these warlike preparations, whether they end in something or in nothing. If I begin to tell you any of the day's transactions, I shall weary you with repetition, their very counterparts having often been recorded before, all I think but the ruling of account books this evening, for the use of the present year. I was rather weary of adding, subtracting, and multiplying this morning. Being just about to lose three of my eldest scholars, I am trying to drive as much into them as I can. When they are gone I shall take my other big one only once a week, leaving one day for infant schooling. I have one or two who stick fast at their letters, and will be the better for some more particular drilling.

*Tuesday, February 2.*—Below zero again, and poor fires to come down to made me feel very cross for about half an hour this morning.

I boasted rather too soon in one of my letters of our stock of seasoned firewood, for very shortly after we came to an end of it. Had we been able to get it drawn in last winter we should have known how we

were getting on, but we made ourselves so sure of a sufficient supply that we never thought of enquiring of the leaders-in as to the remaining quantity, and we were taken by surprise. One feels the change a good deal at first, for the management of a fire is so different with seasoned and unseasoned wood. There is a delightful glow from the embers after the wood is consumed, but if you let the fire get into that state, which after using dry wood one is very apt to do, a wet log or two, probably also caked with frozen snow, will put the embers out before they have time to kindle, etc. You ought to replenish just when the fire is at its hottest, and the habit of doing so is I fancy what has caused such ruinous extravagance in the use of our dry wood. We must study a little economy this year, and burn always a portion of green wood, or we shall never get beforehand. I think we shall scarcely be able to have our supply drawn in, for one of the horses has been confined to his stable these three weeks with a lameness, and the oxen are at present chiefly employed in drawing saw logs down to the lake shore, which in the summer will be formed into a raft and floated to the saw-mill. It seems rather laborious work for the poor beasts. I spent some time this morning in patching a gown. I record the commonplace employment, because I consider it characteristic of the country, or at least of hearth fires and bake pans. When you stoop to do anything over the fire, you have probably a couple of bake pans between you and it, with cinders above and below, and, of course, more or less scattered over the hearth, with the perpetual renewing of them to keep your oven at the baking point. The consequence is that, with the utmost caution, there is many a jagged petticoat bottom among the under officers of the kitchen, whilst the more particular superiors have often

the needles put in requisition. The gown whose misfortunes have originated this dissertation is particularly ignitable, and never goes to work without an additional patch or two. There is no danger of being set on fire by these accidents, for it does not seem in the nature of the thing that a blaze should ensue.

*Wednesday, February 3.*—Capital fire to come down to this morning, to make up for yesterday, and there was some need of it, for the wind was high and the thermometer low. The wind had been for a short time tremendous in the night, and the drift was so considerable that we made sure we could not see John at home. It reminded me a little of a day recorded in my journal of January 1839. That, however, remains unequalled in our Canadian experience. This day's post, to our great joy, brought us your letter of December 23, and thankful we are for another good account of you all. I am glad to escape the educational discussions that go on in England just now, and which I gather something of from the papers. My small school effort here flourishes, whereas Mr. Fidler's school at Fenelon fell off gradually in numbers, and now is no more.

*Thursday, February 4.*—Margaret kindly offers to choose a bonnet for me. I fashioned a little the green velvet one I had in England, which is quite good, and made it look, I think, very nice, but I have only once put it on, for my little fur cap is so much warmer, and my mother saying it is becoming also, I have overcome the reluctance I felt at first to sit at church without the shade of a bonnet. My summer headgear does not sound well in the description, as my choice lay between a bonnet of my mother's and one of my aunt's, the latter taking one of my mother's in exchange. My mother's drawn brown-silk bonnet, somewhat altered to suit me, really is very pretty, and Aunt Alice's large

poke leghorn very snug and shady for a boat, and they are both in excellent preservation. There is this difference between our dress here and at home, that though a good and handsome thing is as becoming and appropriate at times here as with you, the occasions for wearing them are so very much fewer that they last for ever, and it is quite vain to attempt, without the most wasteful extravagance, to be always just in the fashion. For this reason it is desirable that one's stock should be small, and therefore, though I shall bear in mind the kind offer, I have at present no hints to give of a failing in any department of my wardrobe. Nothing wears out fast of the visible garments but shoes, stockings, and the printed gowns we wear in a morning, and which I always make in a fashion that allows me to dispense with collars. This enables me to be neat with much less time and trouble. These dresses get pretty hard usage, as recorded in a previous page, but I always consider myself perfectly presentable in them during any of the morning hours, and in summer until tea time.

Dr. Wallis' marriage has been an acquisition to us indirectly, by setting his married housekeeper at liberty, who was a dressmaker by profession. I am trying her skill at present. I must not expect that she will fit me as well as I have learnt to fit myself, but it is a relief not to have a dress to make in short and busy days. John got home this morning, which is the only thing I have to record of the day's events.

*Friday, February 5.*—There is nothing at all interesting for my pen to-night. John is again off to Eldon to meet his men. We were rather in expectation of callers this morning, having heard that the Tokers were travelling on our road, but they did not make their appearance. We dined early, and let our servant go to see her little one. She will be back to-morrow.

*Sunday, February 7.*—Yesterday (Saturday) was much like its predecessors in point of interest, or want of interest. John got home late, or rather it was early this morning, but night travelling is very good at present. To give you an idea of the brightness of our snow-clad world, I may tell you that last night, although it was so much overcast that I could not distinguish where the moon was, yet did I see that the thermometer was at 27 without a light. I have one very interesting circumstance to mention—I put the finishing stitch to the centre-piece of my chair, namely, the arms. As my work sometimes stands still for a week or two, and sometimes for a month or two, I think it is pretty well to have advanced thus far in six months. And now that all requiring the artist is finished, it is immaterial whether the remainder is completed by myself or by my heirs and executors. I do not know how far you will think that I have been happy in the composition. The only part that meets with much criticism here is the ribbon. I have deviated somewhat from the sketch you gave me, in order to make it simpler, and cannot well alter it now. I shall wait, at any rate, until I see that the perfection of the remainder of the work makes it worth my while. I did not accompany John to church this morning. He took a large packet of despatches for the post. The Eldon men seem to have excited his admiration. They are all Highlanders, and, he says, "a magnificent set of fellows." We had an excellent apple-tart to-day, made of dried apples, quartered and strung on threads, as we used to see them in Italy. When used you soak them well first, then boil them in the same water, and crush them in their own juice, sweeten and put into your tart. A bag of these is a most convenient winter store.

*Monday, February 8.*—I had a short school to-day, as

we dined an hour earlier to enable John to walk down to Mr. Boyd's. He has to see his Colonel to-morrow morning, and intends hearing a few more chapters of Mr. Dunsford's novel this evening. If present plans are executed he is to be back in time to-morrow to take grist to the mill, and bring the letters from the Falls. On Wednesday we are to make out our visit in "Emily."<sup>1</sup> We are in alarm to-night lest we have lost our pigeon. It is absent from its accustomed haunts. I think I told you we were reduced to one. It has been a great pet this winter, living almost entirely on the staircase window, where it receives its meals. Some day or other, when there is nothing else to say, I will give you a chapter on the animals about the place, which are not quite strangers to you. My mother is but very indifferent this evening.

*Tuesday, February 9.*—My mother is somewhat better this morning, and Dovey at its accustomed post—so far well, but our expedition into Emily is postponed for the present, as we learn that Mrs. Street, the lady we were going to visit, is from home. Our informer was Mr. Fidler, who called here this morning. He engaged John and me to dine with them on Saturday, whereby we shall find ourselves ready for church on Sunday morning. John was back in good time this morning, but he has gone down again this evening. His arrival last night just prevented Mr. Boyd from coming here as the bearer of an invitation to him to join a party at Mr. Dunsford's this evening. Mr. Boyd, it is suspected, will one day be an aspirer to the hand of Miss Caroline Dunsford, sought for in vain by Mr. Edward Atthill, but I suppose things are not yet in a very forward state. I am sorry to hear that Mr. Richard Atthill intends to make such a flying visit to

<sup>1</sup> A township of that name.

you. He would have been much better worth seeing on his return if he had been at Seedley.

*Wednesday, February 10.*—This would not have been a day for our journey had nothing else intervened. We had a high wind and drifting snow, with a falling thermometer this morning. John got back in good time from his visit. All the neighbours had been assembled, and for a wonder the Frasers had joined the party. My mother and aunt have been baking gingerbread, whilst I made a slight alteration in my new dress. I am happy to say that the dressmaker has performed admirably, and I shall have no hesitation in trusting her another time. Mending affords plenty of employment; patching again to-night.

*Thursday, February 11.*—I took leave of three scholars to-day. What a snug little party we shall be on Monday! I understand that Mr. Fidler intends to recommence schooling in his own house. He did teach in the church, and I can fancy that having to meet his scholars there, and have a fire lighted, would make an irregular attendance much more annoying. John took his grist to the mill to-day, and brought back with him Mr. Edward Caddy, who is again in these parts. He is not quite so silent as on his first visit to us, which I think took place about the time of my last journal. It is getting very cold again. John says we are quite spoiled by the mild weather we have had so far this winter. Certainly these sharp frosts, when they are the exceptions and not the rule, are more felt. The thermometer has dropped below zero, but not very far. We have another letter to thank you for to-night. Your anecdotes of the children are very interesting to us. I often try to represent them to myself, striving to add the proper number of years to what they numbered when we left; but my picture is a very imperfect one.

How does Alice wear her hair? and have her sisters succeeded to her long plaited tails? What do they measure? I mean the girls, not the tails.

*Friday, February 12.*—We had a great biscuit-baking to-day, and the very unusual interruption of a party of callers. Mr. and Mrs. Dunsford, with their eldest son and daughter, about the first time that Mr. Dunsford had been out of doors this winter, and a very cold day they selected for their drive. They came along the new road, which, for want of more travelling upon it, is indifferent, but it promises to be a good one in time. It is curious that seldom as we see this family, a visit either to or from them should happen to figure in most of my journals. Mr. Dunsford says his novel is the most delightful amusement to him. He is very ready to talk about it, so that the fact of there being one in progress is talked of, I hear, at a great distance from Sturgeon lake. A party of callers being quite an event to us, I felt as if I had got an incident for my journal. But the details of such a visit are just as dry and commonplace as when it is a circumstance of everyday occurrence, and I am afraid it will not have made the 12th of February a bit more interesting to you than any other day of the month. To-morrow night, instead of writing my journal, I shall be making myself agreeable to Mr. and Mrs. Fidler.

*Monday, February 15.*—I have the transactions of three days to record to-night. Saturday was an exceedingly cold day. We had much more ice in the house than any other day this winter. It made me feel very idle respecting our visit, and certainly a colder drive I think I have not experienced. Mr. Dundas, his brother, and Mr. M'Laren were the only other guests, and the evening was a quiet and pleasant one. The parsonage felt warm and comfortable. They patronise stoves altogether,



and the method of warming the upper rooms is by carrying the stove-pipes from below through them, having one or two turnings in them to increase the effect. This plan must answer very well, for the previous cold night was the first on which any ice had been seen in a room so warmed. The upper story of the parsonage is not nicely planned, having been divided into too many small apartments, but below the rooms are good. Mr. Fidler, moreover, intends to lay out a little more upon it, and has planned sundry improvements for next summer. We drove home after church yesterday. It was still very cold, and so it has been to-day, but chiefly owing to the frost being accompanied by wind, for the mercury has stood about zero. Mr. Dundas' brother is starting for home this week. John takes him down to Peterboro, and we think of entrusting our little box to him. We shall be glad to hear if it reaches you in safety. We had planned going over to Camerons Lake to call on Mrs. Dennistoun on Saturday, but the severe cold deterred us. It is now pretty nearly a year since I paid my first visit to that lady, and I am somewhat ashamed to think that I have never repeated it. We have often talked of it, and indeed have set out to do so, but were prevented. It is reported that the Tokers are not remaining on our lake. The father-in-law is much against it, and Mr. Toker's land is not very favourably situated for a residence, having no frontage. John is very busy manufacturing a dial for Mr. Fidler out of the slates you sent out. Mr. Fidler complains that now one and then another takes him to task, sometimes for beginning the service too soon, and sometimes too late. Each one would have his own watch regulate the parish.

*Tuesday, February 16.*—We have the enjoyment of warm weather again to-day, the thermometer having

risen to twenty, at which degree I suppose you are perished at home. Snow, however, accompanies the change, of which we have more than enough already. We have not had so much snow any winter as this one. I daresay here in the woods we shall have sleighing till the lakes open. The sugar-makers, I suspect, will not have a nice time of it. A large party of young men have assembled at John's cottage to-night to start together for Peterboro in the morning, but they have declined joining us at tea, being, I suppose, in travelling costume. I daresay that John's expedition will warm him a little on the subject of the coming election,—the universal topic, I understand, everywhere, but here we are mighty indifferent. I suppose that Mr. Bolton, our guest of last summer, will have John's vote, if he gives it at all. One of the candidates bears a most despicable character, and yet, though admitted by all to be everything that is bad, little short of, if not actually, a murderer, many suppose that he will get in. I hope, for the honour of the Province, not ; but, unfortunately, a vast number of the small farmers are in his debt, and he threatens to sue them unless they give him their votes, and influence their relatives to do the same.

*Wednesday, February 17.*—The party of travellers divided itself into two this morning, taking different routes to Peterboro. John, accompanied by Mr. Hamilton, went by way of Emily, in order to carry an invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Street. Were we to wait to give one until I accomplish my visit, the winter might be too far spent. We can be neighbours only during sleighing time. They would have rather a slow journey, owing to the quantity of snow that has fallen during the previous twenty-four hours.

We have had an exceedingly dirty job this afternoon. We lighted the stove in our spare room in order to

thaw the snow out of the pipe, but it would not draw at all, and after sundry experiments with the damper, we were obliged to take the fire out, the pipe down, disjoint it, and, what was far more difficult, put it together again, and in its place. However, our perseverance was rewarded, for we discovered and remedied the evil. Our boy, Timothy, is a clever little lad, with twice the head that most of them have.

*Thursday, February 18.*—I have been disappointed to-day. I had intended having a small school for a time, and promised myself great improvement in some of my little, dull ones, when they would have more exclusive attention bestowed upon them. But I have a message of application already from the successors to Daniel's farm, who have a family of children, and I suppose next week I shall receive all those who are above six years old, and know their letters.

*Friday, February 19.*—There will have been another disappointment to-day, I am afraid, not to us, but to a poor man and woman who have heard in Ops reports of my mother's medical skill, and had come to consult her. The woman, for a disease of two years' standing, got a few rhubarb pills; and the man, for a complaint in his leg, a bit of flannel. They brought likewise the case of a third person before us, for whom they got nothing, for we dare not prescribe. We have more snow and more wind, with great and rapid variations of the thermometer. Mrs. Russel asks leave to go and see her children again, and gives a most exceedingly broad hint that she wants something good to take with her, so she is to go to-morrow, and have a cake for them.

*Saturday, February 20.*—A dire calamity to-day (don't be frightened). We have lost our pigeon. Really it is gone at last. After living a solitary life

with us all winter, we were to have got it a mate next week. No use lamenting, as you observe touching Dickey's death. I may as well make this the bird and beast chapter I promised you. There have been a few changes in this portion of the establishment. To begin with the first-born, "Rock," broke his leg last summer, and hurt the same twice again, when it was just getting well, which has established him as a limper for the rest of his days. Still, he can run after the sleigh pretty well, and enjoys an excursion as much as ever. "Mowbray" is no more. It had been predicted to him, I fancy, that he should die on a hunting expedition, for a day or two before John was going to hunt, for the first time since he came out, "Mowbray" disappeared from about the place. It was found that he had gone of his own accord to Mr. Boyd's, where he never would remain an hour if he was wished to do so. However, he could not avoid his destiny. Mr. Boyd lent him to a person who was going out to hunt in Ops, and whilst there he found an entrance into a storehouse, and before his depredations were discovered he had demolished a great portion of a barrel of pork. Either from indigestion or thirst, he went into convulsions, so bad, that it was deemed best to shoot him. "Nettle," "Juno," and the cats are quite well, but "Nettle" has had one or two narrow escapes, and therefore is a greater pet than ever. Our ducks did not do well this winter. We lost them both. They bear cold very ill. The other birds are well and fat, and we have had a few eggs from time to time all the winter. "Robin," the horse, is pronounced well again, but he has had a long confinement, and I am afraid will not have earned his oats this winter.

*Sunday, February 21.*—A thaw day, and a bright sun brought torrents of water down where the new and the old roofs join. John thinks it will be difficult to

make it secure, but Taylor expects that he can manage it, though he has not succeeded yet. It must be thoroughly clear of ice and snow, however, before anything can be done. The sun now has great power in the middle of the day, and in due time the roof will be clear, though it should continue to freeze. A good lump of ice, however, has great power of resistance too. I have seen a piece of wood lie on the fire upwards of half-an-hour, and actually consuming on one side, whilst it remained encrusted with ice on the other. Hard frost is very inconvenient in one's larder. You cannot lay by a little broth or gravy without its becoming as hard as a stone, sometimes breaking the vessel that contains it, and not available on short notice. Just now we are specially inconvenienced, for we cannot get into our larder by any means. I do not say that this is exactly from the frost, but it is owing to variations in the atmosphere, acting upon imperfectly seasoned wood, now shrinking it, now swelling it, and destroying the perpendicularity of the door-posts, so that the doors not unfrequently will refuse to shut or open. In the present case, I suppose we shall have to use force at last.

*Monday, February 22.*—I am happy to say that we have got our pigeon again. It had somehow or other found its way through a door ajar (one that will not close at present), and had not been able to find its way out, making all its efforts at liberation at the window. There it was found accidentally this morning, after two days' incarceration without food. In a little time we might have found it dead. However, it seems to have borne its fast very well, having been in thoroughly good condition to begin with. I am to have two new scholars on Thursday; a boy of Powell's, our new neighbour, and one of Jordan's, the latter, I daresay,

fourteen or fifteen years old. My mother is going to superintend the sewing department. Aunt Alice thinks that I have been very negligent to give so little attention to this important branch of education ; but really, without undervaluing it, I have found since I had so many scholars that I had no time to fix work. Two days a week is not sufficient for everything, and I consider that the mothers will teach a little sewing, because they derive immediate advantage from it, but with book learning it is otherwise.

*Tuesday, February 23.*—We left the thermometer at  $42^{\circ}$  last night, when we went to bed, and found it this morning at  $1^{\circ}$ . A fierce wind brought about the change, and it has continued to blow all day. If John is travelling to-day he will be sadly pinched. During our anticipation of a thaw we had the roof as well cleared of snow as we could. Before giving the order I went to see the state of things. Mounting the roof is the simplest thing imaginable. You have only to climb the little mountain of accumulated snow beside the house, and it is just ladder sufficient for your purpose. We had the sleigh and oxen to carry away the snow that was shovelled off, which was very well, for to-day everything is as hard as a rock.

*Wednesday, February 24.*—Eight little pigs have come into the world this morning, to our sorrow, remembering the annoyance of a winter litter last winter. However, this is later, and nearer to a warm season.

Taylor came up this evening for the remainder of the cash due to him, which he declined receiving at Christmas. His arrival was opportune for the opening of our larder door. It seems that it is the frost heaving up the ground that occasions many of these kinds of difficulties. Taylor has just been establishing a Sunday

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CANADIAN SNOWDRIFT.

school at Bobcaygeon. He had been accustomed to teach in one at home, and being a bit of a musician too, he can teach the children to sing hymns. Mr. Need also gives his assistance.

*Thursday, February 25.*—I took a walk down to see the little pigs this morning. The family is comfortably established in a corner of William Ellis' dwelling, and I hope may thrive better than that of last winter. I am afraid there will be a second litter very shortly. Aunt Alice's pet pig is still a member of the establishment. I have had my two new scholars to-day. The stranger is a fine, intelligent-looking lad of eight years old.

*Sunday, February 28.*—Friday was marked only by the arrival of seven more little pigs; and yesterday, by John's return in the evening, accompanied by Mr. Dundas. They fell in with a little gaiety at Peterboro. They had two balls and a picnic, that is an assemblage of almost all the sleighs in the place, filled with ladies, and a drive of six or eight miles out of town together. There were some agreeable strangers in the place also, so that a week was more pleasantly spent at Peterboro than usual. The ladies appear to have made John exceedingly useful, and in return they have made much of him. How will he settle down to our humdrum life? John had business on the road to Port Hope, which induced him to proceed to that place, and visit a nursery-garden, where he has ordered a few shrubs and flower-seeds against spring. There again he was in agreeable society, at the house of a Mr. Whitehead, some of whose ladies he had accommodated by delaying his journey for a day or two in order to drive them down. One especially nice woman he has made acquaintance with, unfortunately a married one, or I think his fate might have been decided. As it is, I do not know that it will be influenced by the expedi-



tion. He had an opportunity, however, of assisting a damsel in distress, so he might get up a little romance out of the adventure. The Wallises, I believe, are on their road home again. I am afraid her home will appear doubly dull to her after playing the bride so long at Kingston. The Tokers have been almost altogether at Peterboro this winter. In reply to our invitation to the Streets, we hear that they are unable to accept it at present, but that if sleighing continues good for some time, they hope to do so. It is, therefore, exceedingly uncertain, as is also my intended call upon them, for, unhappily, both the horses are at present invalids, the one with a violent cold, the other with a return of his lameness. We were just about to start for church this morning when John received a note from his colonel, requiring his presence. Mr. Dundas, however, was to drive me up, and William Ellis go to bring me down, but poor Robin limped so badly that we turned back. Still, I hope, his case is not a bad one, for he appears in excellent health and spirits; when the harness was taken off him he cut all sorts of capers, apparently perfectly satisfied with all his limbs. Mr. and Mrs. Fidler called yesterday, and Mr. Fidler took away with him a very neat dial that John had manufactured. Speaking of time, my little watch has performed very well since it came out again. Before that I wore the one you sent John (a most excellent one), when I was the great authority in the country, and my character for accuracy became quite established. The old timepiece, against all expectation, goes very well, and it is of great consequence to my mother.

EXTRACT from LETTER, dated March 9, 1841.

"I am promised three or four more scholars this week, one of my present children having made that announcement to me ; but I have received no formal application, and I suspect that that ceremony is not thought at all requisite. Another family of children will be fixed near us in the course of the summer, and we shall presently have a pretty population within three miles of us. There is just now the incident of a wedding. A brother of John's man, William Ellis, had a young girl recommended to him the other day. He went down to see her, approved, proposed, and returned an engaged man. Last week he became a married man. There is expedition for you! He is a good, steady workman, and if his choice is as good as prompt there will be another pair of respectable neighbours for us. Our stock of firewood is being drawn in by oxen, and a comfortable-looking pile of it is already in view of the kitchen window. Just now John has got a dial mania, and is manufacturing a miniature one to go upon a magnetic needle, the face of which will be silver, if a piece of money can be beaten out and carved light enough to turn. We selected one from the old coin collection, which I had not seen for many a day. I naturally turned with the fondest recollections to the Swiss cantons, and especially to the Bull's head of Uri, the source of so much rejoicing in that juvenile day.

" A. L."

EXTRACTS from LETTER, dated April 8, 1841.

"I have still only to report the continuance of winter, such a one has not occurred since the settlers came on Sturgeon lake. A few days ago we were in hopes

that the snow was disappearing, and a few patches of earth were visible, but all again is covered with a considerable fall of snow during the night, and which continues this morning. The people are in great fear about their cattle, the fodder beginning to fall short. Many, we are told, have died from starvation, and many more will be lost. As yet all John's stock is in, being but, I fear, somewhat poor, which our small supply of milk indicates. Unfortunately, three lambs have made their appearance within the last day or two, all too soon, I fear, to be reared. We have been more fortunate with our poultry than any one of our neighbours. At the Falls weasels have been most destructive. We have seen none here except one—a beautiful white one, which I hope has left no progeny. This winter we have fed our poultry on grain. It may be rather expensive keep, but we had eggs during the winter, and now abundance. The election for the county has taken place, but the candidate for whom all our young men voted did not succeed in obtaining his election. John had to walk seventy or eighty miles to give his vote, sleeping where he could, and returned half famished and very much fatigued. After a day of rest he was no worse, and soon began sugar-making, which is cold work this weather."

JOURNAL, May 1841.

*Saturday, May 1.*—I am reserving my retrospective glance at recent events, which forms my usual preface, until to-morrow. The weather, too, that interesting topic, will then be discussed; at present I will only say that it has been blowing very cold all day. All hands have been busy to-day completing some netting, which is to guard some of our flower borders from the dogs and

cats, who are very much failing in respect to these rival pets. Painted green, I think this little fence will not be at all unornamental. We have not sown any seeds yet, but made preparation for them. John has been working most of the week at the kitchen garden.

*Sunday, May 2.*—I find that we took our last letter to the post on Easter Sunday, April 11. I made another journey to the Falls the following day, when John had to attend the parish meeting, and I accompanied him to pay farewell visits for the winter. We accomplished our long-talked-of visit to Mr. Dennistoun, ice travelling being beautiful, and, indeed, the sleighing was still pretty good on much of the road, though the mud holes were deepening and widening. John, who has had an annual upset hitherto, thought to escape this season, but he was mistaken. In rising out of one of these same mud holes we went over; hovering for a few seconds over the black place, we just cleared it in time to have a more comfortable tumble. The day after we drove down the lake to call on the Frasers and Dunsfords. The ice was beautiful—the cutter almost went of itself. At this time there was small prospect of the lake opening soon. It was generally expected that May would be far advanced before we should have water communication. However, the last week of April, part of which was very hot, and part very windy, removed the ice from our prospect. We have had a most enduring winter, and yet, I hope, may not have a very late spring. When the snow at last disappeared there was no frost in the ground, and in consequence of that, I suppose, and its being able to absorb moisture, the succeeding sloppy state of things has been of short continuance. We can walk about our garden now with perfect comfort, and but for the cold winds of the last few days should have got our seeds in. To-day has

been very blustering, with snow and hail. Last Sunday we were sitting without fire, and mosquito bitten. It has been a terrible season for the cattle. Many in the country have died—none of John's, I am happy to say, but after having, some weeks ago, churned about three pounds of butter a week, we could for a time scarcely allow ourselves milk for our tea. There is little picking for them now in the woods. When we wrote last John was in the midst of sugar-making. It did not turn out a very profitable concern, one or two boilings having been spoiled, we afterwards discovered by their being done on a cooking stove. All subsequently done in the ordinary way, sugared properly. However, the operations were somewhat interfered with, and at last cut short, by the cattle getting amongst the troughs, and occasionally upsetting them, which could not be prevented, as the ground newly chopped adjoined the sugar bush, and the tops of the fallen trees was the chief food of the poor beasts. People with much cattle have been hunting about the country for new clearings, where they could send them to be kept alive.

*Monday, May 3.*—Our spring cleaning commenced to-day, so a remarkably agreeable week must not be anticipated. I do not intend, as in late journals, to avoid domestic details. It does not answer. If I omit all that does not tell well, I feel it a sort of injustice to relate what does tell well, and my pages become very meagre, excepting on those days when imagination is a little bright. We have summoned our late servant, Mrs. Russel, to assist in the busy week, or maybe longer, for we shall both do it thoroughly and take it quietly. Neither my mother nor aunt are quite in trim for exertion. Our present servant does very well, considering that she had never been in service before, and that it is not worth while to teach her very

thoroughly, as she only remains until July, when she intends, I believe, to join some brothers in the States. Mary<sup>1</sup> was over the other day, looking extremely delicate. I begin to be afraid that she has trifled with her husband too long, and that now she had made up her mind to go home, he will have nothing to say to her. We had a numerous school this afternoon—ten. I have had a very poor attendance for some weeks, often only two dreadfully stupid ones, and one little one. This sudden increase has called for my mother's assistance in the sewing department, and also Aunt Alice's in hearing A B C, but I think I shall now be able to form something like a class. This can only be if they are pretty regular in their attendance, however. There are too many beginners now, with whom regularity is of importance, for me to indulge in a summer holiday, as last year. Some of my pupils, I doubt not, receive good religious instruction at home, but I fear others do not.

It is freezing and blowing hard again to-day. John will be off to Peterboro some day this week. He hesitated a little yesterday whether his canoe or his horse should take him to church, but wisely, I think, decided on the latter.

*Wednesday, May 5.*—I wrote no journal yesterday, for we had a visitor in the evening—Alexander Dennistoun—who came to enquire when John was going down to Peterboro, and also to beg flower-seeds. Afterwards we had to read our dispatches by the post. Mrs. Weld's letter afforded us a little merriment by her grave mention of the destruction of the Falls of Niagara. Some absurd hoax to that effect, I believe, there was a few months ago, and it appears to have obtained entire credence at Ravenswell. Mrs. Weld thinks it must

<sup>1</sup> Mary Scarry.

have been "a tremendous scene"—tremendous indeed!! We have had a beautiful day, at last, and contrived to get a few seeds into the ground, though the indoors bustle was just at its height. All the kitchen end of the house has been turned inside out. I expect this will have been quite our worst day. A little plastering has been done too, and I am happy to say that it is now raining on our work.

*Thursday, May 6.*—It has been raining and snowing alternately all day, and blowing continuously. Such weather would have done ill for us yesterday, when half our possessions were turned out of doors. We have been all very busy to-day, but I have nothing particular to record. I am reminded, however, of a circumstance connected with a former cleaning which made me smile. The dining-room was to be scoured, and we, as usual, had been making most of the preparations for it, such as taking up the carpet, removing furniture, etc. We had left table and chairs that we might take our dinner there before the operation. Whilst seated at this meal, Mary (Scarry) waiting upon us, I saw her eyes wandering over the room, and at length she broke forth,—“Miss Langton, you have not brushed down the walls.” It would be rather strange if a servant with you were to make such an accusation against one of the ladies at the dinner-table. Perhaps this might be as much an observation as an accusation; however, she has taken me to task on other occasions. Our present servant has more of the spirit and capacity that Mary had than any other we have had, and I cannot help feeling sorry that she is the mother of a family.

*Friday, May 7.*—The lake was covered with fragments of ice this morning, brought down the river from Camerons Lake. I fancy this is about the last of it. John has started for Peterboro. He was to have set

off after dinner, but just as he and his companions were ready he found it necessary that he should go up to the Falls first, so they went down the lake in their canoe, and he went up in his, a motion which perplexed us exceedingly, not being aware of the circumstances. He came back again and took tea with us before proceeding on his journey. They are to go to Bobcaygeon to-night, and take up their boat, the *Ariel*. The boating-club have made a purchase of this boat, which belonged to Mr. Stones, mentioned in regatta times as an inmate at Mr. Dunsford's, but now so no longer. It is a very convenient boat on many accounts, goes lightly, and can carry a load or a large party. I fancy its headquarters will be at the Falls. The lake is as calm as possible to-night, which is a most agreeable change.

*Monday, May 10.*—I make no apology for the omission of Saturday and Sunday, for you have no loss, at least I should not miss them if they were blotted out of my calendar. They were profitless days. Our cleaning operations are interrupted. Margaret has had a letter requiring her presence about her own place. Mrs. Russel remains with us during her absence, and on her return we must resume. Meanwhile, we have transferred our labours to John's house. My mother and I were very busy there all this morning, dismantling it, that the walls may be washed with scalding lye, a most desirable thing occasionally in unbaked log-houses, to keep them clear of insects. We have had the first nice spring rain to-day, which makes us look forward to a better supply of milk and butter. Of my ten scholars, half were absent this afternoon.

*Tuesday, May 11.*—Again I was a great part of the morning at John's, replacing things, and left it a very comfortable looking house. Afterwards, while raking stones off the ground in front, a little incident occurred



to me worth relating, and which will tend greatly to exalt your ideas of the intelligence of my scholars. We had been similarly employed one day last summer, and several considerable heaps of stones were scattered up and down, some of which were rather large ones. When the children came to school I happened to be engaged, so I told them to go and remove those stones in front, saying that one big lad might carry away the large stones, and the girls gather the small ones into a basket, with which they were furnished for the purpose. On going in a little time to look after them, I found them clearing away the gravel walk as fast as they could, the big boy having a collection of pebbles about the size of half-a-crown, and the girls one of about the size of sixpences! We have almost a Bootle wind to-day. I think the lake has done rising, and I am looking forward to getting to church on Sunday. Not but that the landing is worse when the waters are falling than before, but the main obstacle at this time is the very strong current in the river. When it is at the worst I do not suppose that John would take charge of me on any account. He once upset himself, and had a hard scramble out.

*Wednesday, May 12.*—The chief event of this day has been the receipt of letters. Yours of April 3 arrived, also one from Charlotte Rawdon, and we are thankful for so good an account of you all. I have nothing further to record than that our cat has a family of kittens.

*Thursday, May 13.*—Last night, just as we were preparing to retire, we were startled by a rap at the parlour door. It was John's man, announcing his return, accompanied by five or six other gentlemen, and some bread and meat were wanted. We despatched the requisite, and a pile of blankets to meet so large a

demand on a cold night. The gentlemen departed again before our breakfast hour. After John had told us the Peterboro news, he unpacked a collection of shrubs and plants that he had ordered in the winter when at Port Hope, and very busy we were getting them all into the ground, disregarding wind and rain. If they do well, and they look promising, we shall be very much beautified. Though not much of a gardener myself by nature, I am quite an advocate for fostering and indulging the taste where it does exist. The constant care and attention that our vegetable friends require make them a sort of children to us, and very much tend to endear home. Interior decorations have little effect of this sort. I do not believe that the most elegant and tasty furniture ever really adds an attraction to the fireside. I can scarcely fancy that it is but just a month since our drive down the lake, when we were still completely covered with snow, and had ice in perfection. Spring seems now quite advanced, and though we have had very little warm weather, we have led our summer life for some time. Our gardens are dug up and sown, the hot-beds already flourishing, and we spending as much time out of doors as the house duties will allow. John was very busy whilst in Peterboro, taking measures to promote a public meeting on the subject of opening the navigation of these lakes and rivers. It is to be hoped that private animosity will be suspended on the 29th of this month, when unanimity will be essential to the furtherance of the cause in hand. It is thought that the Governor-General is not favourable to us.

*Friday, May 14.*—Cleaning was resumed to-day, Margaret having got back, so we were very busy, but contrived nevertheless to rake a border. My mother is better than she was at the commencement of our bustle,

so it has done her no harm, and Aunt Alice submits to take less part in it than she used to do. She does more with her needle than my mother and I do. We have had a soap-boiling amongst other things, but I do not take the same interest in it that I do in candle-making. I wish you could just take a view of another operation going forward at present,—the clearing away the accumulation of chips in the woodyard. If that were not done occasionally, we should soon have our house standing at the foot, instead of on the top of a hill.

*Sunday, May 16.*—Our business was protracted until such a late hour that it was quite impossible to write any journal last night. We rubbed, white-washed, plastered, and gardened, and finally we unpacked a cargo of goods from Peterboro. It was high time our storcs should be replenished. John had not been at Peterboro since February, and at that time having only the cutter, he could bring nothing up. The horse that was useless so much of the winter is now quite well again, and a great favourite. John recommends me to order a side-saddle and habit, that he may mount me on Robin's back when the state of our navigation is not favourable. It certainly might be convenient at times; for instance, I should have gone to church to-day, which I did not. The lake looked black and rough, and our shipping is not yet in perfect order. John was wishing to-day that he could be split into two or three, there are so many things to attend to just at this season, and things that cannot be committed to other hands. You must know there are a great many more hands than heads in this country, perhaps in every country. We are to have some company at dinner to-morrow, a stranger son of Mrs. Hamilton, and three or four other young men on their way down to Peter-

boro. Mr. Beresford, we find, is bound for England, but we are aware of it too late to make him the bearer of anything to you.

*Tuesday, May 18.*—Our party yesterday went off very well; the dinner was well cooked and well eaten. The guests were four in number—Mr. William Hamilton, a young soldier with a little military conceit; Mr. Dundas, Mr. Beresford, and Robert Hamilton, the two last generally denominated “the boys.” The wind must be winding itself up towards a crisis, I think, but no symptom of the wished-for rain. Perhaps these storms are a great deal better for us, blowing away ague, which we have rather dreaded since the risen waters. John walked down to Bobcaygeon to-day, to concoct with Mr. Need resolutions for the meeting of the 29th. Not that this duty devolved upon them, but they thought it quite necessary that something of the sort should be prepared in case the committee appointed had never been able to agree. I daresay he will contrive to combine a visit to the Beehive with this important business. The readings of the novel are concluded, and I rather think music and flirtation will be quite as agreeable. I have been invited to come when a fair copy is written out, and peruse it, which I hope to be able to do.

The gentlemen were all gone before breakfast this morning, and we were at liberty to recommence upon the old occupation. You must be surprised at the duration of our house-cleaning. We have certainly had a good spell of it, though with sundry interruptions. Another year we must try to get the business done before gardening time. We have had a present of a weeping-willow this evening from Mr. Fidler, so we are coming a little nearer to what old Blythe was.

*Wednesday, May 19.*—My mother has been “fad-

fadding," as she says, all the day. My own occupations were very various, but all connected with the business in hand, excepting a visit to the woods to get up a few flowers. There are two or three very pretty ones, and valuable in a garden, because they flower early, when there is little else to be seen. There is not a leaf expanded as yet in the woods, but it has felt much more like spring to-day. Still the sky is cloudless. John says he never saw the ground dryer in August. As the plough goes the dust flies behind it like smoke—sad weather for plants and little chickens. Aunt Alice has had great mortality in her nursery, notwithstanding various resuscitations by means of pepper, whiskey, and hot blankets. We have now a pair of pigeons, but not our old friends of the staircase window. The particulars of our pet pigeon's end I do not like to think about—it was a tragedy. We have dismissed our assistant to-day, though there is still one more apartment to pull to pieces.

*Thursday, May 20.*—John was at home this morning before we were down to breakfast. He brought with him some wild vines and other additions to our beauties, and a few minutes afterwards came Taylor, the carpenter, with a bundle of young cedar trees, so planting again became the order of the morning. I hope Taylor will not be so frequent an inmate as hitherto, but his arrival at present is convenient, and would have been more so a week earlier. He has a fence to the new part of the garden to make, and to-morrow a neatly raked border will be strewn over with chips and shavings, if the flower-seeds are not ploughed up and the young shoots broken off. He is rather clumsy and careless. Gardening is the order of the day at present. John is at this moment making up packets of flower-seeds for the Dunsfords. He has got a reinforcement in Mr. Dunsford to the

University Club.<sup>1</sup> If they increase in numbers there may be some satisfaction in such a society, but at present it consists only of five or six. I had an application to-day to take another scholar, but I find it quite impossible to increase my numbers. I shall, however, make room for the applicant soon by dismissing one who has had the benefit of more than two years' teaching, and, I am sorry to say, to but little purpose. I begin to wish we had, or could have, something more regular in the way of a school. The number of children is increasing, and my cares are much more likely to increase than to decrease. Aunt Alice teaches a little every evening. Our boy, Timothy, is her pupil—not a remarkably bright one, I am afraid.

*Friday, May 21*—This has been a regular gardening day. My mother made an expedition into the woods in quest of flowers, and succeeded in tiring herself so completely that she never was able to sit down the remainder of the day, but was on her feet from breakfast till dark, not at all an uncommon occurrence!! It is beginning to be very warm, and a tinge of green has spread itself over the woods this last day or two. I rather dread the discovery of dead trees in the neighbourhood of the lake that a state of full foliage will make.

*Saturday, May 22*.—To-day has been quite the counterpart of yesterday—raking, digging, and sowing, etc., went on most actively. We have been tantalised with a prospect of rain these two last days, but it does not come yet. You must think that our grounds are much more extensive than they really are to afford us so much occupation. A narrow flower-border runs along the front of the house, and at the end we have

<sup>1</sup> A club of young men who had graduated at one of the two Universities—Oxford or Cambridge—soon abandoned.

rather a wider one, with shrubs at the back. This is all. The grass plat and gravel walk, however, have to come in for a share of our attention. The mosquitos keep off delightfully, but we cannot expect much longer respite. I have been sitting pen in hand for some time, though I have written so few lines to-night. The fact is, I have been assisting at the planning of a garden-house all the time. As one never does two things at once well, I will take leave of you for to-night, especially as I have a great inclination to do a third thing—sleep.

*Sunday, May 23.*—I fully expected that rain would either have prevented my going to church or caught me on my road, but the day kept brightening, and all appearance of the wished-for watering is gone. We performed our journey to and from the Falls per canoe. There have been several changes since I was at church. The churchyard is fenced round,—it takes in all the hill,—the road changed, and the church fitted up with pews. This was decided upon by a majority at the Easter meeting. John formed the minority. Whether the advantages or disadvantages will be more remains to be seen. The pews are left without doors, to obviate exclusiveness, but as some of them are paid for by individuals, there will be some appropriation of them, and this in so small a place is undesirable.

A good deal of anxiety prevails concerning the safety of *The President*, which must be very strong in one member of our community—Mr. Dundas. His brother, who was here for some months, was to sail by that vessel. He flatters himself that he may not have done so, as his name was not on the list of passengers; but it was not likely to be there, as he was going as the captain's guest.<sup>1</sup> Any known calamity must be

<sup>1</sup> He was not a passenger by the ill-fated vessel.

more supportable than the dreadful suspense friends must suffer when a vessel is never heard of more. I am sorry to say that Aunt Alice is very far from well to-day. She has a bad pain in her side, and is feverish likewise.

*Monday, May 24.*—As I write the date it occurs to me that four years have elapsed since we left England, and all the dear ones it contains. How much is brought to my mind by the recollection. But I will not look back. This was a bustling day. Poor Aunt Alice was quiet enough in her bed, but the rest of the house was in great confusion. As circumstances before obliged us to postpone taking our room to pieces, so now they required that it should be done at the present time, convenient or not convenient. I had to take advantage of Taylor's presence to have my wardrobe taken down for repairs, so presently all my possessions were scattered about. Our boy had obtained permission to go for a day to Ops, so some of his duties were on our hands. Add to this it was school day, and suffocatingly hot. My scholars left as a thunderstorm was coming on, with a notion that they would get home before it began to rain. I hear they had a sad journey—trees falling about them, etc. "It never rains but it pours," a saying which this day's downfall has certainly not contradicted. I never saw heavier rain. Since it abated I have just peeped at the devastation in the flower-borders, and I find that there will be good exercise for one's patience to-morrow. I am happy to say that Aunt Alice is something better to-night.

*Tuesday, May 25.*—This was another very busy day, so busy that we were never able to go into the garden, much as we knew it called for our attention to repair the damages of yesterday's storm. I am afraid our flower-seeds will have been all mingled together in one



mess. Streams of soil are carried down in every direction, and the gravel ploughed up in channels. We have had abundance of rain again this evening, and now we are quite satisfied. Aunt Alice continues better, but far from convalescence. It is not easy to give you details of the business of to-day. A notebook at one's girdle to record each occupation would alone give you a notion of our industry. John has been busy transplanting out of his hot-beds, now that there is a chance of vegetation progressing. A beautiful fresh green has spread itself over everything; the air is quite cool again—nay, even approaching to cold to-night, and there will doubtless be votes in favour of a fire to-morrow.

I have been this evening commencing, under Taylor's inspection, the needlework of some venetian blinds, and as the lazy pendulum in the fable calculated how many times it would have to beat in the course of a year, so I began reckoning that there would be 204 small pieces to measure and stitch with the greatest exactness. Taylor departs again to-morrow morning.

*Wednesday, May 26.*—The first thing that greeted us this morning was your letter of April 17. The five little heads were contemplated with great interest, not once, but again and again, and will be, I daresay, again and again to-morrow. They help me to form a more distinct image of the four younger ones. We had another letter also from a firm in Montreal, announcing the arrival of a barrel of biscuits, which in consequence of its not being accompanied by an invoice, could not be forwarded. John doubts whether any invoice sent out after the knowledge of this omission is made known to you would be in time to prevent its being disposed of by auction, as the duty upon it cannot be determined; however, it might be as well to

attempt to save it. We returned to something more like our usual mode of life to-day. Sundry odd duties occupied me until dinner, after which I rigged up a mosquito blind, and then gardened till sunset.

It is perhaps well that the flies will soon put a stop to this, for my mother does more than her strength is at all equal to. She is too anxious that everything should be in a state of perfection, and the smooth lawns and trim borders of old England haunt her recollection. Aunt Alice is only so-so. She thinks her pain is *cramp*, of which she has a good deal at times in her limbs.

*Thursday, May 27.*—The avocations of the morning, as I do not carry the note-book I talked of, cannot be detailed. Since school I have been getting more blinds and curtains ready in preparation for the enemy, and my mother has succeeded in bringing her front border into order. John paddled up to the Falls this afternoon, and after tea set out for a moonlight walk down to Mr. Boyd's, from whence he joins a party in Mr. Dunsford's boat, to proceed to-morrow to Peterboro. Of course most of the gentlemen on these lakes attend the meeting. I trust it will have a prosperous issue. Lord Sydenham, I understand, does not patronise water communication, expecting railways to supersede everything; and of course our particular claim to be the line of road only rests in our beautiful string of lakes and rivers. Summer weather seems returning again. You have seen some varieties of climate in the course of the present month, but a most monotonous alternation between beautifying the interior and exterior of our dwelling. Aunt Alice has been sitting at her knitting very cheerily this evening, but it is only since tea that she has revived; this morning she seemed scarcely any better.

*Saturday, May 29.*—Alexander Dennistoun called yesterday to enquire after Aunt Alice. He did not come in as he encountered my mother in the garden, busy with her man Timothy making a road. To-day I intend taking all the hams and the bacon down, and inspecting their condition. This is an operation that must be very frequently performed. There is a little beetle in this country that I had rather get rid of than even mosquitos or black flies. It infests all our provisions. We intend putting up a smoke-house soon, which is the best way of keeping hung meat—about once a fortnight smothering the little creatures. Tomorrow I shall probably read, ramble over the garden, and give Timothy a long lesson to make up for his week's holiday. I send you a small sketch of our addition and improvements.

EXTRACT from LETTER of June 15, 1841.

“There has been a very refreshing change in the weather, it is even now rather cold. I do not know that I ever felt so oppressed as with the late hot weather. It took three thunderstorms on three successive days to clear the air. These storms come on often most suddenly, but the sudden way in which they disperse again frequently surprises me. One moment the lake is foaming like the sea, and the next all is smooth and smiling again. The meeting concerning the opening of navigation at Peterboro went off very well, somewhat against expectation, and some good result appears to be hoped for, at least by the sanguine. John was accompanied on his return by a Mr. Forbes, making acquaintance with the backwoods. He remained here a few days, and was entertained in backwoods fashion by being set to work. John and he

got the boats painted, which are now again at their anchorage, enlivening the bay."

A letter dated July 10, 1841, gives an account of a visit from a family of the name of Cotton,—Colonel Cotton and three daughters. My uncle and some young men friends went to Peterboro to row them up, and they arrived about midnight on June 30, unexpectedly soon. As an instance of backwoods hospitality it may be recorded that they remained a week, and were entertained by sailings on the lake, music and dancing in the evening—being joined by some of the neighbours; the gentlemen were put up in my uncle's house. It was a busy week, and the old ladies were tired after the exertions necessary to provide for such a large party. In this letter is mentioned the dismissal of the servant boy—Timothy, who, though clever and useful, had become more and more idle and independent.

In a letter dated July 30, 1841, Aunt Anne mentions her final decision to use a small legacy in the purchase of some land upon which to put up a small building for a schoolhouse, the requisite number of children being there to qualify them for the Government grant of £10 per annum. The number of children in the immediate neighbourhood made it important to provide some regular instruction. Two applications had been already received for the post of master, and the neighbours volunteered to give their services for the building. The weather had been extraordinarily changeable, from extreme heat to almost cold. Another boy had been engaged in place of "Timothy," and a second woman-servant was deemed necessary, to save the exertions of the old ladies.

JOURNAL, August 1841.

*Sunday, August 1.*—Being Sunday, and a beautiful morning, not very hot, we all embarked in the *Fairy* for church. Our congregation looked small, both Wallises and Hamiltons being away. When we reached the landing on our return we were met by Mr. George Dunsford, who had come up intending to go to church with us, but, arriving about ten minutes too late, had the pleasure of spending the morning by himself. After dinner a sail in the *Alice* was proposed, and the weather being very inviting, I made one of the party. Before leaving the anchorage John had rather a ludicrous adventure. He had swung himself upon a rope, in order to reach over to the other boat for something, when part of his support gave way, and he came plump into the water. In a second or two he had scrambled up the side of the boat, but, being thoroughly drenched, he swam on shore, and, after the necessary change of apparel, came off to us in a canoc. He said that in the very instant of falling his hand went to his watch pocket, but fortunately it was empty. After this little detention we had a very pleasant sail. Blythe looks prettier from some of the points we viewed it from than it does from the one I am most accustomed to, namely, the road from the Falls. When more distant you see better the various heights of the ground, and when the white house just appears above the belt of trees, the effect is exceedingly good.

*Monday, August 2.*—The event of to-day which has caused the greatest sensation has been the death of a duck. We set two hens upon ducks' eggs this year, and the survivors out of both broods are one pair. Aunt Alice, as usual, is head-nurse to the interesting pair, who are privileged to live amongst the flower

borders. John's harvest would have begun to-day, I suppose, but William Ellis had a "Bee." This will, I fancy, be about the last of the "Bees," until I call one for the schoolhouse. John's man, William Ellis, is going to live at his own place, and in his room will be one Henry Brandon, who has also a wife and child. I do not like strangers. We have our new little man to-day, and shall have a new maiden to-morrow. Aunt Alice and John are very busy stitching at a sail to-night.

*Tuesday, August 3.*—Superintending my new boy, and preparing for my new girl, have been the most engrossing occupations of the day. At least, they have engrossed my thoughts when bodily I was otherwise engaged, and having just had my first interview with the new arrival, I feel something as Cicely may have done when I recollect her coming almost breathless into the room, and sitting down as if exhausted with the effort, exclaiming, "Well, I have said it,"—a little speech to her cook, which had weighed on her mind. And now I am not going to name the domestics again for a week! Mrs. Menzies came with her six children to take leave this afternoon—as fine a family as I ever saw. John Menzies had called by himself a day or two before, having expressed great fears that he should cry. He just held out during the short interview, but was overtaken by a regular break-down at John's house. I felt strongly inclined to weep a little too, when I kissed his eldest little girl, who has been quite one of my favourite scholars. The children looked all quite happy, with their new clothes, their cake, their little presents, and the world before them, no doubt full of bright anticipation.

I believe John Menzies is bound for Kingston, as the focus of everything, but without any distinct plan

of what he is to do. The cause of his leaving here is that he could not make his farming answer. In fact, his wife has been little of a help to him, and I fear that elsewhere he will find his difficulties as great. As his family grow up I hope they will lessen, but I am afraid that they may be yet worse off before they are better. This family has been so long connected with Blythe and its master that we feel much interested about them. John has to go down to Peterboro to-morrow about the transfer of the deeds, and the payment of the purchase money.

*Wednesday, August 4.*—Our breakfast-table was spread over with letters and papers this morning, yours of July 1 was most welcome. Among the others was one from Mr. Johnson of New York, informing me of his wife's death, which took place a few months since. It sent my thoughts back to that portion of my life when the *Independence* was my home. Mr. Johnson's letter brought his wife strongly before me as a singular, but interesting, and, I believe, excellent person. The newspapers have been very engrossing this evening. John set out after dinner. He had a great disappointment in finding a mistake in the shaping of his sail. He has generally been a very successful sail-maker, and this is an unaccountable, and very provoking blunder. My mother and I spent all the afternoon in the garden, transplanting lettuces, tying up vines, etc., etc.

*Thursday, August 5.*—Your birthday, my dear Margaret, descending to the same step upon which I lighted six weeks ago. With your children springing up fast about you, growing old must seem appropriate. As the only daughter of the house I should find youth still very convenient, if it would but stay with me. At times I am much inclined to forget its departure. Aunt

Alice is wonderfully young. We had a walk together to-day, and she tripped away most lightly. She had been longing for a walk, and fortunately a little business turned up for us at Allen's. Meanwhile, my mother busied herself in the garden just as long as she could. We had a miserable school to-day, only two. I suppose it was on account of harvest-time, but I gave no holiday, thinking that so many of the children were too little to be of much use in the field. Taylor came up for a week, to-day, to proceed with some of this work, for we have not quite done with him yet. I have been working diligently at my venetian blinds, that we may hang another while he stays.

*Friday, August 6.*—Besides a visit from Mr. Fidler, nothing remarkable occurred to-day. He arrived just as we were going to dinner, and partook of the meal, but I do not think that he left me any new facts or ideas wherewith to enrich the pages of my journal.

*Saturday, August 7.*—John arrived at home soon after breakfast, walking from Mr. Boyd's. He had accommodated two parties by separating himself from his boat; in one case lending it to convey a load for Mr. Sawyer. This is a younger son of Mr. Sawyer whom we met at Toronto, who has come to settle on the land. There have been a great many departures from Peterboro, among the rest Mr. Kirkpatrick, who is moving to Kingston, and we hear that Mr. Wallis is to occupy his house at Peterboro this winter. Whether this means a final departure from the Falls we do not know. The Tokers have taken leave of Sturgeon lake also.

*Monday, August 9.*—Our having a visitor last night prevented my writing anything. Mr. Sawyer came up to restore the *Fairy*, lent to him by John. He went up to the Falls to-day to look about him, and we partly



expected him back to dinner, but he did not arrive. We were all at church yesterday. The sky being overcast tempered the heat a little, which otherwise would have been oppressive. Rain has now fallen and the wind risen, and we are now quite cool again. To-day not being very fine, my school was more numerous—seven attended. We had a party from across the lake this evening, to consult us respecting a cut finger. A poor, little lad of about five years of age had been handling an axe, and had almost severed the finger at the joint. Two days ago we were asked for sticking-plaster for a cut three inches long. These sort of accidents are pretty frequent, and our store of court plaster is dwindling very much. A further supply on the next opportunity will be very acceptable.

*Tuesday, August 10.*—I am afraid bad weather is setting in for harvest. It has been very wet to-day. John got a little wheat in last week, but the main part of his crop is only just ripe. It makes one feel a little anxious, not only for pecuniary considerations, but for the possibility of having to bake with unsound flour all the year round. However, it is quite too soon to croak. Venetian blind-making, sail-making, and stay-making have been my occupations this wet day, and my mother has been shoe-making, or rather covering a favourite pair of shoes for the second time. I am not quite so economical, and shall have to increase my usual allowance of shoes, for they wear out very fast in summer. We are always on our feet, and our ways are rough. The last two days we made preparation for a guest at dinner, and no one came. To-day we had a small dinner, and one arrived, a Mr. Reed, surveyor, who has been employed in this neighbourhood for two or three weeks, and made, by invitation, John's house his occasional headquarters.

*Wednesday, August 11.*—We had to send our domestic down to Peterboro to have a tooth extracted, and were left with the new-comer, at present rather a poor thing. Servants here are, on the whole, not badly paid, but there is no scale of remuneration according to merit. You give a girl less than a woman but when they consider themselves women they must have four dollars a month. More than this you could not give them without exciting the wrath of all the housekeepers in the neighbourhood for raising wages. I believe it is the same as regards men, unless they have a trade. Knowledge and experience as farmers does not acquire for them additional recompense for their labour. The whole concatenation of circumstances that makes servants what they are in this country seem so natural to its present state that I am inclined to make the best of them, and expect nothing more. If there were skill to be had at a greater cost, there are so few that could afford to employ it that the supply would not be kept up. Girls never expect to remain long in service, and seldom do long enough to gain much experience. They are too uncertain to be worth much teaching, at least it seems quite customary to leave them untaught. John visited in Port Hope last winter, where the dinner and wines were of the best, and the horses and sleighs of the handsomest, yet the lady of the house always laid the table herself. My mother said to one of our servants, "I shall iron that best tablecloth myself; I always do." "Indeed, ma'am," said the girl, "I think every lady irons her own best table linen." I am not more disposed to wonder at the deficiencies of our domestics than I am greatly to commend the honesty of the backwoods, where there are so few temptations, and fewer opportunities for dishonesty. The weather seems improving—stars bright to-night.

*Thursday, August 12.*—The weather has been very fine again to-day. I trust it will continue. We eat our first melon to-day.

*Saturday, August 14.*—The three last days have been beautiful for the harvest, and they have been leading in wheat all to-day. John thinks his crops are pretty fair. The wheat is good, but somewhat scanty. The dry season created great fears among the farmers. There was one most astonishing crop this year, that of dandelions. You can scarcely conceive how thick they came up. The whole ground in parts was one mass of them, and it was quite melancholy to see the seed blowing about over the newly-ploughed ground; you might take it up by handfuls. John's new pupils are come to-night, so we shall have more strange faces about us. I do not like it.

*Sunday, August 15.*—It is four years to-day since we landed at this place. There have been many changes, and one grievous one since that time, but when I dwell upon any former period sufficiently long to bring it vividly before me, with all its trials and anxieties, I generally find some cause for thankfulness, and so it is now. We have had a beautiful day, and all went to church. Afterwards, as John had a letter to write at the Falls, we ladies sat gossiping with Mrs. Hoare. My mother gave our old friend Margaret Hamilton an invitation to come and see us, with which she seemed highly pleased. After dinner, as John and I were in the garden, I had a better view of a humming-bird than at any time before.

*Tuesday, August 17.*—There was nothing to record yesterday except the advent of a new scholar, a boy of eight years of age, who does not even know his letters. This prodigy is one of John's household, a nephew of his new woman, who promises to be well worth his

keep, for he is a smart active lad, though not bright at his book.

To-day has been very hot again, and we have had a hot employment,—ironing our muslin things. I was much amused to-day with watching "Rock" and the cat. Puss had kittened this morning, and "Rock" takes the greatest interest in her young family. I found them by themselves in John's house, he sitting beside her, watching and licking the kittens, and turning them over with his nose with the greatest delight and fondness, while she seemed highly pleased with his attentions. We hung another venetian blind to-day. Taylor has taken leave to-day. He has got on very slowly, having been unwell, and requiring nursing half the time.

*Friday, August 20.*—I have been busy with my accounts, and neglected my journal for two days. Keeping accounts is a somewhat perplexing affair in this country of no cash. John, for instance, must keep an account open with almost half the population. He never goes to Peterboro without three or four neighbours coming with their little commissions, some bringing the money, some not, some part of it, and so forth. Yesterday John and I went over Camerons Lake to pay a visit to the Dennistouns, and fetch Margaret Hamilton. We had a beautiful day, and a pleasant breeze, and the *Fairy* performed admirably with her new sail. I had never seen Mr. Dennistoun's place except when the ground was covered with snow. We got home to tea, just before dark. You will not easily guess what had been my mother's occupation during our absence—manufacturing a pair of trousers for her new boy out of an old bed-tick. Nowhere but in this country would a lad have been sent out to service with such a scanty supply of rags. I am afraid

that this second Timothy is too much of a child for us requiring too much looking after. John has had a loss of four little pigs, carried away two successive nights by some wild beast,—most probably a bear. The bears are very fond of pork. He intends to sit up and watch to-night. Jordan had a three-months'-old calf eaten by the wolves within his own clearing the other night.

*Saturday, August 21.*—John kept watch all night, but saw nothing of the beast. However, two more pigs are missing, and these went in the daytime, and, moreover, were not very little ones. These are the first misadventures with the live stock this season. Maggie and I took a walk this afternoon to the harvest-field. We found John cradling oats in one of my fields, he having taken John Menzies' crops in payment of debts due to him. We talked over the situation of the proposed school building. If we put it in the township of Fenelon, as desired, there will require some chopping and burning before anything could be done, and as people are always pressed for time in this country, that may be a consideration. My mother is finishing the trousers to-night, and I am stitching away at my corsets. Hers has been a wearying piece of work, I am sure, and mine will be a tedious one. We had another application for sticking-plaster to-day, and two for medicine.

*Sunday, August 22.*—My mother was not quite well enough to go to church this morning; the rest of the party went. Aunt Alice walks as actively up the church hill as I do. I have no doubt that she feels the exertion more, but I believe, for a short distance, she would yet outwalk most ladies. Mr. Wallis is come up for a few days to his old home, which I fancy he regrets. Mr. M'Laren volunteered to come down and hunt the bear to-morrow. Whilst we were at church a

very respectably dressed man came here and sent in a sixpence to my mother, asking if she would give him some refreshment for himself and his companion, and very unwillingly took his sixpence back, when she gave him some bread and cheese and a jug of milk. The companion proved to be Admiral Vansittart's brother-in-law,—quite a young lad.

We had another laugh afforded us to-day by the letter of a schoolmaster, not addressed to myself, who is wanting to know if he is "the object of her ladyship's choice"!

*Monday, August 23.*—Mr. M'Laren came up, but his zeal on our behalf or our defence was vented upon a few innocent pigeons and partridges, upon which we shall luxuriate for a few days.

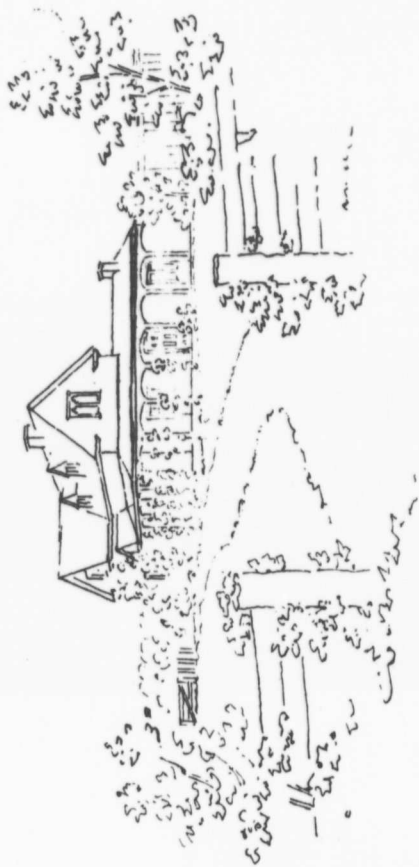
*Tuesday, August 24.*—I am afraid that we shall luxuriate upon mutton, for John thinks one of his sheep has received a mortal wound—"misfortunes never come single." The pigs are now housed away at night, and I hope that the bear will forget that there is such a thing as pork. The weather continues most beautiful. With the exception of the two wet days at the beginning of harvest, and one trifling thunder shower, there has not been a drop of rain. This is particularly happy for us, as, with a scarcity of hands, the work does not proceed very rapidly. We have had applications for medicine again both yesterday and to-day, and our medicines are quickly disappearing. I am sorry to say that there is ague on the other side of the lake. We have yet seen nothing of it here. Our boy took it last spring, but it was after going for a day or two into Ops, which is a dreadfully unhealthy township.

*Wednesday, August 25.*—To-day the sheep that John decided to kill had to be cut up, an occupation which I need not dilate upon.

*Thursday, August 26.*—I daresay that Alice and Ellen would like to know how I go on with my young visitor. She has so much liberty at home that it is quite a trouble to her to find amusement here, and it often puzzles me to keep her employed without occupying too much of my own time. She does not care much for reading. I have been teaching her how to make little pincushions, which she has found very interesting. She is an affectionate little girl, though I do believe she kisses me many times in a day just for want of something better to do. I was looking very grave this morning, and she whispered to Uncle John, "I can make her smile whenever I like." "How is that?" asked Uncle John. "Oh, by calling her Aunt Anne." She is very fond of "Uncle John," and he of her, and he plays games with her in an evening, and sometimes they have a great romp together. She has no play-fellows at home, as all her brothers and sisters are a great deal older than herself.

*Friday, August 27.*—We have a change of weather to-day, but we had warning of it from yesterday morning. An east wind is here our most infallible sign of rain in summer and of snow in winter. John employed the wet day in completing a catalogue of the books preparatory to the increase they are to have when the packages arrive. We muster amongst us about 1200 volumes. This sounds a great deal more than it looks. It is possible that Mr. and Mrs. Street will be our guests to-morrow night, and I may be entertaining visitors instead of writing a journal, so this day ends the month.

The letters of September and October were entirely concerned with accounts of our grandmother, who was taken alarmingly ill early in September, with pain and



PLANTING, AFTER ADDITION.



sickness. The treatment resorted to seems to us in these days very severe and dangerous, especially the large amount of calomel given, causing the mouth and throat to be in a most painful state, and rendering either swallowing or speaking almost impossible. It also brought on a painful eruption down the spine. Her mind remained remarkably clear throughout the illness, which continued, with occasional slight improvements, followed by relapses, until early in November. She made a wonderful recovery, but her strength and general powers were much enfeebled.

In one of the letters an acknowledgment is sent of the arrival of the marble bust of our grandfather, which now belongs to our cousin, Hugh Hornby Langton.

The new school Act came into force for Verulam in November. The condition of the grant was the regular attendance of fifteen children, and the adoption of what was called the Irish system. Three trustees had to be appointed by the parents.

#### THE NEW ROOM AND IMPROVEMENTS.

##### EXTRACT from a LETTER.

"You will observe that the new room imitates the verandah,—has a window opening to the ground in the centre of intercolumns, and a door on to the verandah corresponding with the house door going into the porch. The wash-house and new workshop are slightly indicated behind the garden *wall*, which is boarded, and very neat. Under it runs the border with shrubs. The grass plot goes quite up to the verandahs, but between the gravel walk and the house runs a narrow flower border. We have vines planted at every column, which will soon be mingled with roses. The trellis-work for

two honeysuckles on either side the new room window is marked to assist the description, and vines are training round the parlour and porch windows in front. The little plantation just beyond the house looks well, and further still you may observe the garden rails and gate, leading down to John's house."

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1842

FROM a letter dated January 9, 1842, are taken the following extracts :—

“The English mails are not in yet ; travelling must be very slow just now from the perpetual heavy snows we have. Every one is looking anxiously for the January thaw to disencumber the ground of some of its burden. Scarcely any chopping will be done this year in the country ; to get out as much firewood as is necessary is just what each house can accomplish. . . . John had another fit of ague about a fortnight since, and was very invalidish for about ten days, but it departed just in time to allow him to partake of the amusements of Christmas, and enjoy them. He seems all the better, too, for his gaiety. The bridal party was up at Mr. Dunsford's, and he went down and stayed three days, and afterwards as many on Camerons Lake, coming home to do the honours here to the little party we entertained for the bride. She herself was the only lady, though we asked one of the Miss Dunsfords to accompany her. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Fraser dined with us on Christmas Day, and Mrs. Hamilton and her daughter Margaret are come to spend two or three days with us, so that we shall have made for ourselves a little more variety than usual. John, I am afraid, will have to be a great deal away again this month. He is obliged to be in Peterboro on the 15th, again on

the 23rd, and again early in February, so that it scarcely allows him to come home at all between these several days."

In another letter, dated January 10, mention is made of my uncle having been appointed district councillor for Fenelon, under a new arrangement of Lord Sydenham's, whereby the interior business of each district was to be conducted within its own boundaries.

Mention is also made in the letter of January 9 that Mr. Need was returning to England, having inherited the fortune of an aunt. His departure was much regretted, as from his education and general information he was a most agreeable companion. The arrival in the colony is also noticed of Mr. Wickham, who afterwards became the husband of the eldest Miss Dunsford.

EXTRACT from LETTER, dated February 3, 1842.

Blythe.

"Our weather continues most variable, a slight covering of snow with a little frost for a day or two, and then a thaw, which nearly clears the ground, and renders the roads almost impassable. It is very bad for drawing up cord-wood from where the land will be wanted for cultivation. Cord-wood is so called to distinguish it from logs or trees drawn in, often to be cut up at the door. A 'cord' is a pile of pieces cut and split, four feet long, and the pile itself must be eight feet long and four feet high. These are cut again according to the length of the fireplaces, and often further split. So much of the chopping being done in the woods saves some of the accumulation of

rubbish in the wood-yard. At present we are assisted by Mr. Boyd's man and horses, and a spare horse of Mr. Dennistoun's to make up our own team, so that we should have made great despatch had the ground been in its usual state. Our consumption of wood requires large stacks—awfully large. . . . We have had Mr. Boyd with us for nearly a week, to keep quiet and nurse a cut foot. Since John left us he has come up to dine with us sometimes. He is a favourite of mine; he is not a brilliant nor animated, but has much goodness and kindness, and simplicity of character, and is an example to all our young men for industry, attention to business, and study of economy. He is about five- or six-and-twenty, and came out the year after John did. Mrs. Hoare is coming on Saturday to stay a couple of nights with us. She is a cheerful, talkative, old-fashioned woman. Mr. Hoare is a fine specimen of a man above sixty, and very gentlemanly in manners. His mother is living in England, and stout at the age of ninety-seven. The Fidlers have been with their friends at the Front. Poor Mrs. Fidler will have made sad complaints of the dulness of the backwoods; the situation is not in repute at present, and it is said that only English ladies can make themselves comfortable in such solitude. The Wallises are at Kingston now, and we had a call from Mr. Wallis a little time ago, when he came to look at his deserted place. He gave us an account of the splendours of the seat of government, the sledges and horses' trappings all new, to impress the mind of the newly-appointed governor, who, Mr. Wallis reports, is a fine-looking man, carrying his years with dignity. His ministers, on the contrary, seem to be a set of the shabbiest-looking creatures, but many may have good heads for all that."

EXTRACT from a LETTER, dated March 3, 1842.

"We have latterly had more snow than during the previous part of the winter, accompanied by high winds, so that the drifts are, or rather were, very deep. For the last five days it has been thawing most furiously. I have often looked at the piles of snow other winters, and wondered how they were to disappear without inundating us, but the warm suns of February and March generally produced so much gradual evaporation that we experienced little inconvenience in the spring, never less than last year, when the snow was most abundant, but the ground in consequence had little frost in it, and imbibed the moisture very quickly. This year it is just the reverse, for our zero days found the ground often quite bare, so that now the water streams over the surface down the side of the hill, threatening to flood us. Timothy is busy making channels for it, and I am just going out to superintend him. . . . John set out this morning for Peterboro to bring up some packages, which he was not able to do when he returned from Kingston, being brought up by Mr. Dunsford's sledge. The horse with which he left for Kingston was left at Peterboro, having become lame, but is now right again. John does not go alone, as one of the Dunsfords is going down with him, which is very satisfactory to me, for these lakes make me nervous. Yesterday John attended the funeral of Henry Dunsford, who has been a great invalid both before and since arriving in this country. He was interred in their own grounds—a spot which Mr. Dunsford had selected soon after coming out for themselves and their family. Mr. Dunsford read the service. He had been watching his decline and suffering for many weeks, and had composure to

commit his body to the earth, in sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection. Mr. Need, Mr. Boyd, Mr. Fraser, and John were all who attended; they were all known to him since his arrival. . . . John left Kingston with a cold, and was very ill with fever during the journey, which, from the state of the roads, took three days and nights to reach Peterboro. He took only one cup of tea during that time, and by total abstinence he thinks cured himself; but he became very thin."

My aunt mentions the great amount of illness at that time—ague, fever, and other results of the sudden changes in the weather—and the unusual late cold. The colony was at that time in an unsettled state with regard to education. The Act which had been passed by the Government had not given satisfaction, and the School Commissioners of the Fenelon district had come to no decision as to what course to pursue. My aunt was in doubt whether, in case there was no school established, she should resume her old labours,—try to establish a small school herself, or leave the young people to run wild for a time.

EXTRACT from LETTER from my GRANDMOTHER,  
dated April 22, 1842.

"Our lake is now open. John went in his canoe to church on Sunday; Anne did not accompany him, as the current in the river is very strong on the first breaking up of the ice. For the last few days it has been quite summer weather, all fires have disappeared, double windows removed, and the garden the most engrossing occupation with Anne and John. I can give no further assistance than advice where to plant or sow in my flower garden. The kitchen garden looks very nice from my window, all of John's doing except

a little digging now and then from our boy. A little more planting has been done to-day about the house, which will be an improvement. Last year we put in nothing but what Anne and I selected in the wood, and got bitten by the black flies in doing it."

EXTRACT from a LETTER, dated May 16, 1842.

"We are just now enjoying the Canadian luxury of being without servant,—Margaret left us a week ago,—the article servant is scarce at present. Our neighbours are suffering in the same way. We are not quite so badly off when thus situated, for John's man's wife is at hand to apply to on emergencies. She comes up every evening to wash up, and on Saturday afternoon gives the kitchen a scrubbing. Our boy is rather much of a child, but perhaps all the better for that in the present state of the household, as he is not too proud yet to do a little woman's work when required, so that I hope we shall do pretty well until our enquiries are successful. No efforts of mine can keep my mother from making greater exertions than I can approve of. John is at Peterboro at present, attending the second meeting of the District Council. We partly expect him home this evening, but not certainly, for the Council sat much longer last time. I mentioned in a former letter that the gentlemen of our district had declined to act as magistrates. The reason and motive for this action of theirs was to testify their disapprobation of the new appointments, make Government sensible of its blunder, and so lead to a speedy readjustment of things. The newly-appointed magistrates were men of almost the lowest degree, some unable to sign their own names correctly, and utterly incompetent to perform the duties of their office. When



John went recently to Ops about the robbery of the contents of our boxes, he had himself to draw out the warrant for the magistrate to sign, and to dictate in every particular what steps were to be taken, having in the first place lost time in seeking for another magistrate, because the one at hand, sensible of his own incompetency, had expressed reluctance to act. A district councillor is not more exalted. John and Mr. Need are the only members of their Council who rank as gentlemen, but they muster some shrewd, sensible men amongst them, and I hear no complaints of their companionship."

It was at this date that the "family group" was drawn which forms the frontispiece to *The Story of our Family*. The artist thinks it may serve as a "lesson card" to teach the babes to point to grandmother, Aunt Currer, Aunt Anne, and Uncle John, not forgetting the equally important members of the family, "Nettle," "Rock," and the pussy-cat.

A letter dated June 29, 1842, describes a ploughing match:—

"Our young men have decided to hold a ploughing-match this year with their horses and men. A field belonging to John is fixed upon for this trial of skill, and as the gentlemen will assemble we ask the ladies for the evening. After the labours of the day the men, and those in our immediate neighbourhood, with their wives, are to have an entertainment in the barn, where music will be provided, and plenty of bun loaves, good rice-puddings, ginger-bread, and tea and coffee. I wish I could say no whiskey, but that cannot be omitted, as no temperance society is yet formed in this remote, uncultivated district. Our party mean to look in at

them, and John will open the dance. It is the first agricultural meeting in this district. I am prepared with some beautiful pink ribbon to mark the winner. The gentlemen connected with the match will have the tent fixed on the hill for a cold dinner—we shall entertain the ladies. Our flower borders will not be in full beauty when our visitors come, as all is so late this year, and the seeds slow of growth, but the roses and vines will soon be beautiful. The house is now nearly covered to the top with the latter."

The domestic question, and the school question, were pressing at this time :—

"After Margaret left us we had the pleasure of remaining nearly five weeks without a servant at all—little Timothy excepted. After that Margaret returned to the neighbourhood, having given up her Irish journey, at least for the present, and she came to us for a time until we were provided with a servant, but not to remain, for she wishes to take a place where she may have her little girl with her.

"Servants are very scarce just now. The people are becoming more independent of us, whilst we do not become more independent of them. None of the Peterboro servants will come so far back, so that beyond what the neighbouring townships offer there is small chance. How scarce girls are in these townships you may imagine when, among about fifty that we reckoned up of the neighbours to attend our entertainment next week, there will be only one unmarried girl, namely, our late servant, Sarah, about seventeen. However, we have at length succeeded in hearing of two servants, both new arrivals in the country, one the daughter of an Irish weaver, six-and-twenty, and has never been in service before. She is large and clumsy,

very plain, and, I am afraid, rather stupid, but, as far as I can see, willing, so we must hope to make something of her. The other I know nothing of but that she is English, which sounds most promising in my mother's ears. Considering that we have the milk of eight cows to manage, and shall wash all at home, I do not think the increase in our establishment too much. We do require more cleanliness and comfort in our internal arrangements than is customary in this country."

As regards the school question—an Act had been passed by the Government in 1816 to establish and assist common schools in Upper Canada, and Commissioners appointed to enquire into the educational needs of the various districts. The Commissioners had decided against a school in Fenelon and Verulam, but as the inhabitants desired that their district should be made into a school district, they would have to pay a tax whether they had a school or not. A donation from the family at Blythe, who were anxious to have a school, and whose donation depended upon the establishment of one, turned the scale, and a school was started. The school had at first to be held in a barn temporarily, the small building used before in connection with the church not being available.

Later on, the Government had to make different and more adequate provision for education in the country.

An anecdote showing the simplicity of one of Miss Currer's two pupils, my uncle's boy, has not been before recorded and deserves a place:—

He had been helping to sweep the chimneys, pulling the rope below, and had been pretty well smothered with soot. As he was going away I said, "Stop, Billy, I will give you a basin of milk to wash down the soot." Whilst I was going for it he called

out to the man on the top, "you must not come down yet, Henry, the chimneys are to be rinsed with milk."

EXTRACT from LETTER, dated Blythe, July 23,  
1842.

"This sketch shows the scene of the ploughing-match, held on July 7. Right in the centre of the piece you see the roof of the barn in which the entertainment was held in the evening. A little to the left stands a beautiful marquee, surmounted by the British flag, and near it a group of ladies and gentlemen assembled to witness the spectacle. The dotted lines mark the land that was ploughed, and scattered up and down it you may perceive the four teams that contended for the prize. The one nearest this way, and now approaching the brow of the hill over which the barn is seen, is the one that will win the day. Beyond are seen the beautiful waters of Sturgeon lake, and the woods and hills that surround it, and in the left corner you may observe another British flag floating over the residence of the Langton family. The whole thing went off very well, and occasioned less hurry and bustle than many a minor affair. We began in good time, and were baking every day for nearly a fortnight before, so that on the day itself, though we had to receive many of the gentlemen at breakfast and dinner, I felt perfectly at liberty to attend to our lady guests when they began to arrive about three o'clock. Our party numbered twenty-six, and when after tea we joined those assembled in the barn, I believe we were altogether about a hundred.

"The ball was opened by a country dance, in which the gentry joined, and such of the people who were not too shy. These came out more in the jigs that succeeded, after which we gave them a quadrille, and then

retired. We attempted no more dancing at the house, being scarce of young ladies, but had a very pretty supper, and when the ladies retired for the night some of the young men went down and had another fling in the barn, where the fun was kept up till after daylight. I am proud to say there was not a drunken man, except one of the musicians, who, although a temperance character, wet his lips too frequently with beer. An abundant supply of coffee and tea, and the milk of all the cows, preserved us from the disgrace which I rather apprehended.

"Some of the young men departed early, and we sat down only two-and-twenty to breakfast. Nine of the party we accommodated with beds in the house, the remainder rolled themselves in blankets, in the old backwoods style.<sup>1</sup> The entertainment in the barn, being of far more importance than that here, I will tell you of what it consisted, in addition to the 'Ram,' an animal that was celebrated in the township, having in his day knocked down pretty nearly every man, woman, and child in it. There were twelve very large, cold rice-puddings, with abundance of currants in them; the same number of bun loaves, with eight or nine dozen of both ginger-bread cakes and of currant cakes, and plenty of bread and butter. In the meat line there was lamb and poultry, the garden and dairy furnishing a variety of accompaniments. We have estimated the expenses of this treat, and judge them to have amounted to about £7:10s., which I think it was well worth, from the great satisfaction it appears to have given in the neighbourhood. Perhaps that sum might not quite cover the wine and other extras here, but then we must have company sometimes. As fine weather had been uncommonly scarce this season, I must not omit

<sup>1</sup> Note by J. L.—"Not one of us ever went to bed at all."

to say that we had a most brilliant day for the occasion, yet delightfully cool, which was very important to our comfort. The greatest drawback to the pleasure of the day was an alarm that one of Mr. Boyd's horses had been seriously injured by over-exertion. It was not pronounced quite out of danger till the next morning.

"I have now to make a transition from mirth to melancholy in recording the next event that has interested us, namely, the death of a poor man who had just arrived out from Ireland, with a wife and four children. He was taken ill the very day he arrived, and in about a week was no more, leaving his poor widow in the strange country, with no nearer friend than a brother-in-law. This man, William Thornhill, is now our nearest neighbour, but not hitherto known to you by name, having only settled on his land this spring. As the country populates we shall scarcely keep you acquainted with the names of all our neighbours. Among the new arrivals is a medical man in Ops, who was summoned on occasion of this poor man's illness, and spent the evening with us. He appears a decent sort of person, and being within a few hours' call, may be a great acquisition in the neighbourhood, if he remains. The question is, whether he will be able to live upon our ailments.

"Our summer at last fairly set in about a fortnight ago, and some tremendously hot weather we have had. The garden has taken a great start, and we begin to look very gay; but the change is all too late to afford us our usual supply of vegetables. We have still ice in the ice-house, but it dwindles fast. Our ice-house has only been lately made, and I hear that they never do answer very well the first year. Ours, too, is not perfectly tight and complete yet, and we are going to add a chimney to open in cool weather, and let out the

damp air. This, I hear, is considered a great advantage, so on the whole I think it promises to answer its purpose. In the domestic department I have to report that Margaret has left us, but what she is going to do I know not; some say to be married. She is either very mysterious or very irresolute. The large clumsy wench I mentioned in one of my last letters we have put into her place in the kitchen, and though very ignorant yet she seems less helpless, now that she has to depend more upon herself, and as she still seems very desirous to please, I have great hopes that she may do. The English girl we expected did not come, but we have taken again our old servant Sarah, who, though no way remarkably accomplished, yet knows something of the ways of the house, and is clean and comfortable looking. On the whole we are pretty well off, perhaps I ought to say very well off, when compared with some of our neighbours.

"I am thankful the hot weather did not come sooner; we can now take things more quietly. John has to be very busy at present, for his man Henry is ill, and almost every day there is a 'Bee,' which takes every other hand away. These 'Bees' are getting a perfect nuisance, the period between seed time and harvest is almost filled up with them. Some of the gentlemen talk of forming a logging association, cutting 'Bees' generally altogether, and helping each other with men and cattle for two or three days at a time. I do not know whether they will find this less inconvenient, but something of the kind is requisite where people have much land to log up, for it requires numbers to get on well and profitably. I am sorry to tell you we have another great bustle in prospect, nothing less than the taking down of both chimneys.

"We have been threatened with the necessity of this calamity for some time, owing to their sinking so much.

Still, we kept hoping there would be an end of it, but it was finally determined that the thing was inevitable, and must be done next year. As my mother has a great objection to packing up and leaving the house whilst the operation is performed, we have resolved upon taking one down this year, and the other next year. This makes two messes, but renders it possible to continue occupants of a part of our house.

"The builders up here were more inexperienced five years ago than they are now. The foundations were not well managed, and the chimneys themselves most enormous ones. Some of the rooms will be greatly improved by the alteration. One chimney we shall not rebuild, but have stoves. The horizontal lines of the building have been greatly unsettled by these weighty masses of stonework. I suppose our wooden walls would not be easily pulled about our ears, but there is some danger in the case of one chimney lest a portion, supported by the woodwork, should not sink along with the rest, and a crack ensuing render us in peril of fire. The last word reminds me of John's present work, which is about as unpleasant as any that can devolve upon the Canadian settler. It is termed 'branding,' and consists in going about among the burning log heaps, and putting together the fragments as they scatter in burning down, so that all may be consumed. The heat, you may suppose, is just as much as is endurable. The smoke is most distressing to the eyes, and the dirt beyond description. John has but a small piece of ground to burn himself, having given a job of clearing this year, but he has been 'branding' the last three days, and it will take him at least another to get through. At night he goes to the lake to purify, but we admit him to the dinner-table in costume, the shades of which are somewhere between



the smith and the chimney-sweeper. We have an announcement of the arrival of our packages at Montreal, but are destined to have a little more trouble about them this year. We hear that the specification of their value, forwarded along with them, is not deemed sufficient, and that unless we can send the original invoice they will have to be opened and valued. We have sent your statement of the contents and charges, which, if not perfectly satisfactory will, I hope, have the effect of deterring them from examining such a multifarious collection."

"The dahlia roots, which seemed to be dead, are many of them flourishing, promising to be very ornamental in a few weeks, if early frost does not make their beauty short-lived. The beautiful pansies come up thinly, except those I kept in the house in a box, which look remarkably healthy, but not yet in flower. Our chickens have been a sad failure this year, and we have no turkeys. My pigeons always sat in the poultry-house, but since that was pulled down and removed they wander about and sit on the roof. We have put up two houses for them, but they take to neither. They lay eggs, but have not yet settled to any place to hatch them in. They come to feed at the staircase window, and look very pretty, and interest us. I look with pleasure and admiration at our verandah when I take my morning walk in it. The vines are up to the ceiling, and one of the rose-trees (a wild one) is nearly as high, and is quite a picture, so covered with flowers, and giving a sweet perfume, the want of which I have felt in the flowers in general here. When I think of what we were four years ago, our progress in the premises is wonderful, and repays us for all our care and painstaking.

E. L."

EXTRACTS from LETTER, dated Blythe, August 26,  
1842.

"The two expected packages are reported as having safely arrived, and the contents as being greatly appreciated.

"I think, notwithstanding all the kind presents that are added, that our first thanks are due for the trouble you annually take in executing so many commissions for us. We are all much indebted to you, and John in particular, who has already enough to do to provide the house with all its necessities, without having his taste and judgment further taxed to suit the ladies out of the paucity of a Canadian store. Can you fancy the interest and curiosity with which the little miniature cases were successively opened?<sup>1</sup> The representation of the one face we all perfectly know taught us in what respect we might, and in what we might not, trust to the correctness of the others. It was for the sake of the likenesses that we first contemplated them, and only subsequently as curious specimens of a new art. Nothing of the kind has been before seen up here, and by some who do not read newspapers as we do, not even heard of. Newspapers certainly do help to keep one a little *au fait* of what is going on in the world. . . .

"The books you send for my lending library are very welcome. Those for our own perusal are more certain of being speedily useful when our reading months come. They have already set John upon rearranging the shelves of the bookcase, and planning a new one for the dining-room. . . .

"The last few weeks have been quite uneventful. John attended to his duties at Peterboro as councillor, and came home very disheartened about public business

<sup>1</sup> Daguerreotypes.

and the men he had to deal with. You must expect him to become very Tory-ish in his ideas, especially as to withholding power from the unenlightened. By a foolish Act, and a more foolish repeal of the same Act, they have thrown school matters again into confusion. However, I trust there may be no interruption to the progress of ours, which so far, apparently, prospers. The attendance has been pretty good and regular, I understand, and the children are said to improve. We have been remarkably quiet this summer, having seen scarcely any one here. All the gaiety of the year seems to have been concentrated in the ploughing-match. Our chief subject of interest lately has been a case of sickness and distress in the neighbourhood. We mentioned a death by fever of a man just come into the country. About a fortnight after three other members of the family fell ill and narrowly escaped the same fate. This occasioned a panic, and ended all but the most necessary intercourse with the shanties where the families lived. We had caused one of the two families, living together, to be removed to a shanty on my piece of land, which I honour with the name of 'Farfield.' One courageous woman has been invaluable in both places. She said that she smoked, and before going into the house took a little brandy and wormwood, and considered herself proof against infection. One of the families, the widow of the new settler and her three sick children, are perfectly destitute, having even sold their bed at Quebec as they came up. We have not much distress here, but when we have it is a bad case, and in this one the woman is helpless and senseless to a degree that, after the excitement of commiseration, she will try the patience of her kind neighbours. . . .

"As soon as harvest is over we are to commence pulling down a chimney, and shall be in confusion.

We have had very fine harvest weather so far, but a storm seems now impending. The garden is just now in great beauty. Both useful and ornamental gardens are giving satisfaction at present. We are feasting upon vegetables, and a large and excellent melon graces the tea-table each evening."

EXTRACTS from LETTER, dated Blythe, September 16,  
1842.

"We had hoped to have begun our chimney business by this time, but hindrances have arisen. Our right hand, Taylor, has been laid up, and has now a part of his harvest to get in before he can come, whilst the weather reminds us of how the season is advancing. My first farming speculation will be an unprofitable one, owing to this unfavourable change in the weather, before the termination of harvest. Our summer has been a very short one, almost all confined to within two months,—July and August, but we may yet have a short reprieve before our long winter sets in. Frost, however, ought to be welcome this fall, as it will probably prove a check to ague, which prevails still very generally, and there are still some other cases of fever in the neighbourhood. The Thornhill family are now all convalescent, and as no further fatal cases have occurred, I hope there is not so much danger in the present prevailing complaint as, from some of its violent symptoms, anxious friends are led to apprehend. We so often hear that people are not expected to live through the night that we begin to disbelieve the seriousness of the reports. They are very unknowing about medicines. Some take double doses, and our poor widow gave all the physic we sent to the child who patiently took it, whilst the other, who declined it, went

without. Mr. Wallis has offered to take charge of our box, and to deliver it in person to you. He and Mrs. Wallis have decided to go home, and are setting sail in October. They talk confidently of coming back in a few months, but as they have sold off all their furniture, all the Store goods, and movables of all sorts at the Falls, we are rather inclined to mistrust them. Mr. Wallis came up a few days before they left, and during his stay we had him and a few other gentlemen to dinner. Mrs. Wallis came down to drink tea with us one evening, and we suppose that this was a kind of leave-taking. Mr. Hartley Dunsford's marriage is at length going to be accomplished, but it has ceased to be a subject of interest to us, for he is settled at Peterboro, and no longer belongs to the lakes. Amongst the other invalids has been our dog "Nettle," in consequence, we believe, of meddling with a dead porcupine. The quills have entered some tender part, and are not all out yet, I am afraid. We killed a porcupine here the other day, and eat it. It is said to resemble sucking-pig, but I thought it more like lamb. We took good care to make away with its covering, for, alive or dead, they are very dangerous to the dogs. The motions of the animal are very like those of a bear, so much so that Aunt Alice, seeing one at a little distance, thought it was a young bear. The bears have let us alone this year more than the last, but the foxes and the hawks are as destructive as ever. A hawk got hold of one of our pigeons the other day, but being pursued let it drop. The poor creature was almost dead with terror, but otherwise no worse."

In a letter dated October 9, 1842, mention is made of a great deal of fever and ague, and the family at Blythe had not escaped.

Mention is also made of the death of Mr. Toker, who left a young widow and two little girls.

The safe arrival of the saddles is also announced.

JOURNAL of November 1842.

*Tuesday, November 1.*—November of last year I passed over, as no pattern for that of other years. What this will turn out remains to be seen, but it opens favourably, namely, with weather that would do credit to any month, much more so to this much calumniated one, and, moreover, with a new arrival in the person of a Mr. Constable, who dined with us. We ladies have been discussing him since, and are not agreed as to his years, I think about two-and-twenty. He is very respectable looking, but has not quite the manners of a first-rate gentleman. I will tell you to-morrow what John thinks of him, and he has had much better opportunity of forming an opinion, as besides a long *tête-à-tête*, he went in company with him up to the Falls. The object of the journey there was to get our letters. We hope to get one from you, and John expects a letter which may influence his movements, the public business it relates to being likely to take him down to Coburg. This journey has been impending some time, but he hopes it may follow immediately upon the District Council meeting next week, and that one absence from home may suffice. The Council meetings fall at very inconvenient seasons—in spring, when the frost has just left the ground, and everything has to be done again; in the midst of harvest; and now, when there is no certainty that a person can get back again by the road he went. The lakes are seldom thoroughly closed quite so early, but the first of them being shallow, we are often shut in for a week or two before they are so.

The arrival of Mr. Constable being quite incident enough for one day, I shall spare you all minor ones, but I will tell you a little of our past and present, that you may better follow the narrative of our future. We are restored to the comfort of our own parlour and bedrooms, but the partition between the dining-room and the hall is still not up, so we have converted the last built lodging-room into a dining-room for the present, and an excellent one it makes. Our carpenter had to leave us in this unfinished state to go and get in his potatoes, but I am happy to say he is at work again now. The hall and dining-room will be heated by one stove, and the partition will be made to open with large doors if occasion requires it. A stove here is a perfectly movable piece of furniture, so that it may be placed elsewhere or taken altogether away, if in summer we were to desire to avail ourselves of the folding doors, and make a large room of the two. We are not contemplating giving a ball, but were pleased with the spacious, airy appearance, and the thing is easily done. The partition will be of butternut, and the dining-room will be lined with the same, but the hall will exhibit its bare logs for some time longer.

I hope before I close this journal I may be able to give you a better account of my mother than I could do now. She has been suffering from headaches very much the last week, and I do not think she mended the matter by going up to the Falls last Sunday. She wished very much to go to church once more before winter, but was disappointed, as Mr. Fidler was too unwell to perform the service. It is clearly an unhealthy season, and many of these ailments, which do not assume the distinctive marks of ague, are yet, no doubt, attributable to the same cause. There are a few cases of scarlet fever at the Falls now; I hope that will not spread too

*Thursday, November 3.*—I did not take out my journal last night, Mr. Boyd having walked in just before tea. The chief event of the day was the arrival of your letter, which appeared with John at the breakfast table. He had arrived home before the lights were extinguished in this house, but reserved our treat for the morning. All your tidings are very satisfactory, save those that relate to dear Cicely.<sup>1</sup> She was ever one of my best and kindest friends, and none outside the walls of Blythe or Seedley would be more regretted by me. To you, to whom her neighbourhood makes her tenfold more valuable, the loss would be great indeed. I can well imagine how we may have omitted to mention Aunt Alice, perhaps for several letters in succession, for the even tenor of her way affords but little room for observation. However, we will bear in mind that it is difficult to realise the truth that no news is good news, and in future you shall hear more particularly of her welfare. The most effectual way would be her occasionally taking a portion of the sheet, but, like John, she does not patronise the system of joint epistles. She and I are just beginning to shake off noisy, troublesome, but not very bad colds. She says it is the first she has had since she came to Canada. I think I remember a trifling one before, but at all events, both with her and with me, they are much rarer visitants than they used to be. The weather still continues most splendid. It is quite melancholy in such beautiful sunshine to be making preparations against frost and snow, and almost all our occupations just now have these in view, getting everything into the house or into the cellar that can be possibly injured by the sudden appearance of the enemy. I promised you John's opinion of Mr. Constable; it coincides pretty much

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Hugh Birley.



with ours. He is a Staffordshire man, and has been in the iron trade. He seems pleased with the lakes and desirous of settling, and the land he wishes for would make him our near neighbour, so that it may become much more important than I thought whether we eventually like him or not. The news of to-day is not very pleasant. The mill at the Falls is broken. However, as the accident by which it suffered might easily have proved fatal to two men, their escape should make us think more lightly of the minor evil. Nevertheless, the prospect of having to take every grain of wheat down to Bobcaygeon is dismal enough for the whole neighbourhood. We must eat less bread and more meat, which last is dreadfully cheap, so much so that nobody likes to kill anything that they can keep alive, and to make anything fat does not pay at all. Pork is something less than a penny a pound, and beef about a penny farthing. My mother's occupation to-night reminds me of you, Margaret. She is making a worsted ball, destined for the only very juvenile member of our society.

*Friday, November 4.*—John was up at the Falls this morning, and brought down the comfortable intelligence that the story about the mill is a great exaggeration, and that we may hope to have our corn ground as usual there this winter. His errand, in which he did not succeed, was to get a rafting chain, having sent men to cut building logs a little lower down the lake, where they abound; and the woods about here have been well picked through. After an early dinner he went down to superintend the work, and whilst away Mr. Edward Caddy arrived. I think you know him by name, as he has often been here before. He has been staying on Camerons Lake lately, and is taking us on his way down to Peterboro, where I suppose he

will accompany John early in next week. Lest you should have forgotten all about him I may tell you that silence is the grand characteristic of this gentleman. Our own motions to-day have not been important. I have been manufacturing a pattern body, that I may send down an order for a riding-dress. I long to see myself thoroughly equipped as an equestrian, though I daresay I shall not mount very often. The last time I was on horseback was in your company, Margaret, on the first of June, 1831. If you do not remember the ride, I have no doubt that you remember the day, for it was a much more important one in your life than in mine. We have some idea of having a third horse; the reason for which, if you remember the history of the preceding winters, and the frequency with which all work has been interrupted, will be apparent. John intends to dispose of his favourite—Robin. He is a nice horse, and a great beauty, but rather too fine a gentleman for the rough ways of the woods. My mother's head continues very bad. John and I would persuade her that it is aguish. Everybody agrees that the headache which accompanies the prevalent complaint is very peculiar, and very bad; indeed it is attended with more, and more serious, aches and pains than I had conceived of it, and such as often occasion alarm until their connection with ague is clearly proved. I am strongly inclined to the opinion that ague was mingling itself with the late symptoms of my mother's illness last year. It is by no means necessary that a person must shake in the ague. When they do the complaint is more treatable; the dumb ague often lasts for months.

*Saturday, November 5.*—I have little to remark of this day excepting that it was as lovely as its predecessor, and as I have nothing to record I will take the

opportunity of telling you that Mr. Hartley Dunsford is at last married. The wedding had been delayed on account of Mr. Toker's death, Mrs. Hartley Dunsford being sister to his widow, and now took place without the usual assemblage of friends and relations, not any of his own family even attending, excepting Miss Dunsford, who had been staying with her brother for some time previously. The home of the young couple is Peterboro.

*Sunday, November 6.*—John decided to start this afternoon, and get as far as Bobcaygeon to-night. The lake was like a looking-glass as we went up to church this morning, but I fear that a change of weather is impending, and that our travellers will have rain for the latter part of their journey. They started soon after dinner, and pretty busy we were giving John our list of commissions. It is a pretty long one, for he has not been down since the beginning of August, and will not go again, in all probability, during this year. Moreover, the Store at the Falls is now entirely given up, so that we have to send to Peterboro for every individual thing, down to a bit of pepper. I believe that Mr. Sawers intends to have a store at Bobcaygeon, but I do not anticipate much from it, nor can it be a great convenience to us. Mr. Sawers is no acquisition to our society here; we do not see him twice a year, nor do we wish it. You know that he is younger brother to the young man who figured occasionally in John's early epistles.

*Monday, November 7.*—My mother put a blister on her head last night, not, however, with any perceptible good effect. It may tell more to-morrow, perhaps. This headache increases her deafness very much, but I hope that will mend again when the pain departs. I was stirring all morning, but my labours make no show,

nor can I contrive to make them illustrate any peculiarities of our backwoods' life. They were such as might have occupied the superintendent of a household anywhere else. I had a long confab with our school commissioner, Taylor, about the school. They are just beginning to build a house for it in a permanent situation, nearly three miles from here. I think I shall talk to Taylor about the library, as he is interested in all such things, and is the only active man in the Bobcaygeon library. I find the quarterly sixpence is a hindrance to the circulation of the books. Some intend to subscribe and never come, whilst others who are really thriving say they have never found themselves rich enough. This must be more from the scarcity of cash than from the actual value of the sum. John says there seems no difficulty in producing sixpence for a glass of grog! I think I shall be obliged to accept a pound of butter or a few eggs in payment, and put the sixpence into the bag myself. I am afraid that I shall have to be perpetually dunning one subscriber or another. I talk as if I had a great many, but I have but four to my own library, and three to that of Bobcaygeon, some of them being the same. However, reading time has not come yet. I am happy to say the rain held off to-day, and John will be now safely housed at Peterboro. Aunt Alice walks down to his house every day to feed his cats. When he is at home pussy generally accompanies him up to tea, if she has not been here before, but invariably jumps up to follow him down as soon as he takes his hat. I believe it is the smell of her supper that awakens her. He always has a morsel given him to regale his animals with.

*Tuesday, November 8.*—I spent a great part of my morning in the store-room. Its contents had been

removed for some of our arrangements this summer, and have now been restored to their winter quarters. It would have been a job just in my mother's line had she been equal to it. It requires very neat packing now to get things neatly stowed away. You have no idea how things accumulate here. In the first place, there is the necessity of having stores of everything. Then there is the habit, that grows upon one, of having a good stock beforehand of consumables, and reserves of articles that are liable to decay, and lastly, the duty of carefully putting away anything that may by any chance ever become useful for any purpose again. If we send an order to the tailor we have to send thread, buttons, lining, etc., and sometimes the tailor will come to us to beg a bit of lining for another person's coat. It has been raining and freezing all day, one of the most comfortless days our climate produces. I am glad it came no sooner.

*Wednesday, November 9.*—This morning was passed in an unsatisfactory manner, seeking that which I could not find—a small key—and, remembering my mother's spectacles last winter, the ashes were riddled two or three times over, but all to no purpose. To-night I have been stitching very diligently at a gingham gown of my mother's that I am altering for myself; and when I have done it I must attack a silk one, which I consider a very important affair, for a better gown here lasts for years. The muslin one you got for me will last for ever, unless I degrade it. It has acted the part of a better gown a year and a half, that is, it has lain in my drawer ready for use, and has never been put on. This durability does not extend to common gowns, and I find my wardrobe suddenly getting low. If you see anything pretty for a morning gown I shall be glad if you will get it for me. When I say for

morning I do not mean the rough garment I have described myself as wearing, but one in which I shall feel neatly dressed. I must tell you I grow more and more averse to very light colours, and do not patronise thin muslins, because they look neat for so short a time. This will prove a very extravagant year, to make up for the last, when, beyond my English shoes, I spent nothing in dress, my mother having made me a present of the muslin, which she could well afford to do, as the sum total of her own expenditure had been eight shillings. There are certainly some advantages in living in the backwoods. I am still more inclined to think that my mother's headaches are allied to ague, and could I disguise the bitter, I should be apt to put a dose of quinine in her coffee to-morrow morning. We were obliged to send for a collection of little phials for quinine, which are still in great circulation, and seldom a day passes that one does not appear to be replenished. I wonder how many doses of medicine I have weighed up in the last four months! I think almost as many as some village apothecaries. I have altogether written of myself on this last page, but you shall now hear what the other ladies have been doing. My mother has had a nice invalid employment in relining a workbox, and replenishing her own and everybody's needle-book. Aunt Alice has been mending and altering a pair of John's old trousers for our boy, whose parents get all his money, and send him no clothes, expecting, I suppose, as has often been the case, that we shall take compassion upon him, and give him some. I am glad to tell you that the key has been found.

*Thursday, November 10.*—Henry has at last found time to kill three pigs, and if he can contrive it he will go to the mill to-morrow; all which is very well, for we were out of meat and out of flour at both houses—

on the point of starving in the midst of plenty, literally for want of time. This is always an uncommonly busy season. There are fifty things to be done before winter, one half of which, of course, never are accomplished. There are no extra hands to be got, because everybody else is making up things too. It has been snowing almost all day. My mother has been decidedly a little bit better.

*Friday, November 11.*—We have been busy in the kitchen to-day, and if you could have looked in upon us the sight would have appeared rather strange in your eyes. It has ceased to seem strange to me. I regard preparing hams and pigs' heads as the natural care of the mistress or daughter of the house. I have begun my list of commissions for next year. If you have purchased any more stockings for me they will be welcome, as I care not how large is my stock of so useful an article. I intend to wear every one of those I have myself, they are very comfortable, now that I am accustomed to them. I believe I criticised the texture as well as the size, but I had been comparing them with some particularly fine and soft ones of my mother's, of long ago, that I had been wearing. We had a fire in the hall stove for the first time to-day, when the dumb stove in my room was proved to give out a great deal of heat, and produced a most comfortable temperature. It is merely a sort of enlargement of the stove pipe of sheet-iron, looks neat in the room, and will be a great addition to the comfort of the house. We are sadly spoilt in these cold winters with our heated halls and staircases, and fires in lodging-rooms from morning till night.

*Sunday, November 13.*—Yesterday produced nothing important. It snowed all day, as if we were going to be finally covered up, but the snow has been melting

again to-day under a hot sun. It was beautifully fine but much too dirty to go to church. We have probably made our last water expedition to the Falls. I think I never ascend the river without building a castle about taking you, William, up. I fancy to myself what impressions would be made upon you, and recall my own first ones, and such are generally some of my musings at the helm. I am sorry to say that our servant, Margaret, had another ague fit to-day, and spent the greater part of it in bed. The mention of her name reminds me that when you last heard of our arrangements she was our temporary servant, but she has become our regular one again, so that the establishment is precisely what it was last winter. Our Bobcaygeon maiden returned to us cured both of her lameness and her ague, but still bodily and mentally slow, so willing and good-natured, however, that it quite grieved me to have to give her notice, which we did merely on account of Margaret's desire to remain with us, who is certainly more competent to make us comfortable. Mary saw the reasonableness of preferring an old servant, and we parted the best of friends. I believe she is going to live with Mrs. Dennistoun, who has been singularly unfortunate, or perhaps I ought to say fortunate, for in this great scarcity of servants she has contrived to have about ten during the summer. Mr. Boyd was good enough to come and look after us to-day, which we thought very kind and civil. He brought no particular news, but the agreeable intelligence reached us through another channel that John may be at home to-morrow. I should not perhaps call it agreeable, for I wished the Cobourg journey to come off now, instead of continuing to impend. It relates to a settlement of accounts with the Newcastle District, from which ours has been set apart, and the



difficulty of providing an arbitrator, satisfactory to both parties, has been a main cause of delay.

*Monday, November 14.*—John is not arrived, but some of his packages are, by the passage boat. We have got an addition to our live stock—four beautiful hens, and a little, Newfoundland puppy dog. How naturally boys take to dogs. The little animal was taken to Henry's, and when I informed Timothy we could have it up here, and that he might go for it, he scarcely waited to hear me out, but with an exclamation of delight, darted off like an arrow. Our breed of fowls wanted improving sadly. We shall now begin to reduce our number, and I hope shall have a more select and satisfactory stock next year. My mother, who was comfortable yesterday, has been very poorly to-day with new and additional pains, so she has been amusing herself with making a warm petticoat for one of the family of the poor widow, whose case we must have mentioned in former letters. I may take this opportunity of telling you how she goes on. Excepting ague, which occasionally visits her, the family is quite recovered from sickness. We have had the old shanty made tight for her, so that she is as comfortably housed as many of her neighbours. A subscription list is now going the round of the neighbourhood. Some put down their names for a bushel of wheat, some for a small sum of money, or to such a value in provisions, and amongst us there will be no immediate prospect of starvation for her. Unfortunately the eldest girl, and the only one old enough to be useful, is exceedingly deaf, which will be a great hindrance to her getting into service. My mother talks of taking pains to make her a neat needlewoman, and give her some of those accomplishments which might compensate in part for her deficiency.

*Tuesday, November 15.*—Between writing this date and proceeding to journalise upon it, I have produced some wine and ginger-bread to celebrate your wedding day, and now I will go on with this its eleventh anniversary. I hope it will have produced something brighter with you than with us. I am afraid we have an accession to the number of our ague patients in the person of Miss Currer, at least she has most of the symptoms which generally attend its commencement. My mother's head has been better to-day, but some of her other pains so great that we do not venture upon administering quinine. Margaret was also, of course, invalidish to-day, but she is wonderfully well on the alternate days, so that we regulate household arrangements accordingly, and alter the work, etc., so as to fall upon the "well" days. My mother finds out that our life is dull now that she is not well, and as we have no prospect of visitors to enliven us, it has been projected that I should go up to the Falls for our letters to-morrow, and try to bring home a little news, or variety of some kind, but there are many chances against my accomplishing the journey. John's non-appearance inclines me to believe that our information was erroneous, and that he has either gone to Cobourg, or has been otherwise detained on official business. He is in great hopes that he may be balloted out of the Council now. He neither likes the time it costs him nor the expense.

*Wednesday, November 16.*—A more wintry state of affairs than we have yet had put a stop to my projected excursion, so I have failed to procure any variety either for ourselves or for you. We sent Timothy to the Falls, and the post has furnished my mother and aunt with a subject of thought, though rather of a mournful nature. A letter from Mrs. Frank Wilts gives a melancholy account of poor Mrs. Backhouse, who had fallen

in getting out of bed, and broke her thigh bone, since which her sufferings had been very distressing, especially as they were partly of the mind. I am thankful to say my invalids are somewhat better to-day. I hope Aunt Alice's indisposition was accidental and not aguish.

*Thursday, November 17.*—The snow will scarcely disappear again now, but the lakes cannot I think close for some time, for there has been absolutely no very cold weather yet. I have been trying to manufacture myself a winter bonnet to-day, for I am getting tired of my cap. It is rather guess work, as I am ignorant concerning shapes. However, I do not think that it would be wise to send any order for a bonnet, as it is by no means every one that would suit my physiognomy. I wish that I could procure a Persian lady's head-dress, so as to conceal it altogether.

Did we ever tell you that John one winter wore a black mask for the purpose of keeping his nose end warm.

*Friday, November 18.*—Real winter at last, thermometer about 12, and a high wind. Many is the sigh that has been given to John to-day, wondering where he is, and wishing he were at home. But we in the house are not always good judges how endurable it may be outside. I remember feeling very anxious one day last winter, when he was to ride down to Peterboro, after staying the night at the Beehive, and consoling myself with thinking that he certainly never would set out, for it was as many degrees below zero as it is now above it, and blowing most fiercely, but he did set out, and, moreover, declared that he had never felt cold all day. I have completed my bonnet, and very pretty and snug it looks, that is, it would be pretty on any other head. I shall not want it till about Christmas, but I am getting all these little jobs done that I may

with a good conscience make an attack upon my chair, it has been about nine months untouched. My mother has begun a letter to you to-day. Both she and Aunt Alice keep better. This frost will answer the end of quinine, I hope. This little settlement has not been quite so severely dealt with by ague as another populous district behind Mr. Fraser's, where three individuals only have escaped, whole families being ill at once.

*Sunday, November 20.*—There was nothing pleasant to write about yesterday. The weather was as bad as ever, and my mother's head worse. The latter has been much better to-day, and a bright sun made everything look cheerful again this morning. I hope the wind will not rise again to-night, for the sake of a basket of delicacies, which is doomed to pass it perched on the top of a high stump, if happily it does not lie at the bottom of it. My mother was sending an offering to Mr. Boyd, and Timothy, finding no one at home and the door locked, took this method of ensuring the safety of his cargo until Mr. Boyd's return; but it is scarcely likely that arriving at, or after, dark, the unexpected basket will attract his immediate attention. If it escapes the beasts of the field, there are the fowls of the air that might scent out the dainties. The thought of the feast they will have reminds me of one we saw devoured on the ice last spring. John had been observing the motions of an eagle, and, taking the telescope, saw it with its beak break through the ice, which must have been pretty thick, though softish, and afterwards with its talons hook on to a large muskinonge. We watched it for a long time enjoying its meal, whilst another eagle waited patiently to seize upon the remainder, when its companion should be satisfied, the smaller birds hovering round at a more respectful distance. The weather has been so moderate to-day that

I think John may have set out, if his business was finished, but the character of the Cobourg discussion has been that of tedious delay all along. Moreover, he had another affair on hand besides the Council work, having been appointed an arbitrator himself in another dispute, the merits of which, nay, even the subject of it, he was unacquainted with when he went down. I dreamt of my journal last night, but somehow or other matters were reversed, and we had all the children here, of whom I had many things to record, but I only remember one prank distinctly. One of the party had taken a bundle of best drawing pencils, all pointed ready for use, and began throwing them one by one as javelins into the fireplace, where, however, there was no fire. But when the missiles were nearly expended, the lost point of one of them, hitting the dog-iron, struck fire, when the valuable fagot all kindled up, and with great difficulty I extricated one or two from the burning mass. As this was dreamt especially for your entertainment, I could not withhold it. The dear little ones! they are often in my thoughts, though their names have not yet found their way into this sheet. I have some misgivings that I never directly thanked Alice and Ellen for their presents and letters. The fact was I intended to write them, or rather did actually write them each a letter, which were to have gone by Mr. Wallis, but it was decreed that, being a sworn postmaster, I could not ask him to take charge of them. We are now very scrupulous about putting even a note into a box going by private hand. Give them now their aunt's kind love, and just as many kisses as will not quite smother them.

*Thursday, November 24.*—I am rejoiced to have to say that John is once more at home again. He arrived about noon to-day. A bad cold had been the first

cause of his detention, then unexpected public business, and these things, together with the inclemency of the weather and the dreadful state of the roads, combined to prolong his absence. He would scarcely have attempted the journey now had he not thought that we should begin to be anxious, and so we all had been, though we said little of our fears to one another. We are become more liable to take alarm, so many fatal accidents have been brought under our notice, occurring either to those we knew or to their immediate connections. I am sorry to say that I have another to record, whereby poor Mr. Jamieson is mourner. A younger brother had just arrived out, and the two, along with another gentleman, were in a sailing boat near Kingston, when it upset. Mr. Jamieson, as the best swimmer, made for the shore, two or three hundred yards distant, whilst the others remained on the keel of the boat until he should bring assistance. But he lost his way in the woods, and after wandering about for two hours in the dark, reached the spot from which he started, to find his companions still on the boat. They called to him that they were getting quite numb and stiff, and again he started to get help. This time he succeeded, but too late, his companions had disappeared. Their bodies were found the next morning. What an agonising time for Mr. Jamieson whilst in vain endeavouring to recover his way. He himself was perfectly exhausted by his efforts. On this lake he has had as narrow an escape as man could have, and but for Mr. M'Andrew would have perished. Such a catastrophe makes one feel doubly thankful, when all that is most dear to us is safely housed around us, but the mercy we are experiencing is still more brought home to us by another unhappy occurrence. John was strongly recommended and urged to come by Mud Lake and cross the ice.

He entirely declined doing so; the same day a man was drowned in attempting it. May we show forth our thankfulness, "not only with our lips but in our lives"! I must now return to yesterday. My mother says she is tired of seeing the snow, which is early in the day. We certainly have a prospect of soon sleighing this winter. Mr. Boyd, who was always a favourite, completely won our hearts by paying us another visit. He brought back our empty basket, and alas! empty it had been when he found it the same morning. The united wisdom of our man and his man has not shone forth conspicuously. Why did not the former put his charge into the stable when he found the house shut? But the latter actually saw the basket on the stump an hour or two after it had been deposited there, and thinking it might be one of their own baskets, or perhaps not thinking at all, left it where it was. Mr. Boyd and I had a game at chess together. He professes to know very little of the game, but he beat me. I have played occasionally lately with John, he having a board before him, but no men, whilst I play his men at his dictation. Strange to say, I have never won a game, even with this advantage over him. I must give you a specimen of simplicity in a daughter of the woods. In coming up John had followed a wrong track, and come upon a clearing that he was unacquainted with. Seeing a girl of about thirteen, he asked her whereabouts he was. Finding her puzzled to make a reply, he inquired who lived there. Her answer was "Father." "And who is your father?" This quite perplexed her, so he put his question in another form, "What do they call your father?" "Us calls him pa," was the most satisfactory information he could obtain, and he had to proceed to the house itself with his enquiry.

*Friday, November 25.*—I had so much to write

yesterday that I forgot to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of October 16, and Mrs. Weld's, with the long recipe for currant wine, which at first sight quite frightened me, but I find it has acquired its magnitude from the character of the writer, and has afforded my friend a nice opportunity of indulging his scribbling propensities. The lake is now completely frozen over, and the snow keeps falling. Never was there so much remembered in November before. As usual in unseasonable seasons, many are put out of their way. Few people have done their under-brushing, and unless the brush is cut away before snow they cannot clear. It is not of importance to John, he does not care about clearing this winter. It may add a little to the expense of getting our firewood, but then we shall consume something less now.

*Saturday, November 26.*—I shall send off my letter to-morrow to ensure its sailing the middle of next month. I will conclude it with a bulletin of health. My mother is much better than she was at the commencement, though still not in her average health, but very busy with her needle in the service of others. Aunt Alice knitting away diligently, and pretty well again. John's cold not improved by his tramp through the snow, but he says it is only taking its natural course, myself *à merveille*.

*Monday, November 28.*—The weather was so cold yesterday that no one went to church, and my letter in consequence did not get to the post. I may therefore give you the remainder of the month. Mr. Boyd arrived again yesterday to pay his visit of welcome to John, as he had of charity to us, and we have succeeded in keeping him to-day. Such a thing in ordinary times is a perfect impossibility, for he is one of the most industrious home-keeping settlers we have. But the



snow has left him nothing to do, and I think if it does not go away, and make chopping practicable, we may have more of his company this winter than usual. The mercury has been dropping below zero, I suspect, though it was a trifle above it when I looked out this morning, and the putting in of double windows, and stuffing with cotton-wool, has been a good part of my occupation to-day. One of the things that were not accomplished before winter set in was the erection of a new poultry house. You know the cause of the evacuation of the old one. Their temporary habitation is found quite insufficient to shield them against the cold; one or two have had their feet frozen already, so we have sent them down to the farm-yard to sleep with the cattle. It is a very common thing for poultry to lose some of their toes in winter, and during the last one our cat lost a great part of one ear.

*Tuesday, November 29.*—It is dear little Ellen's birthday. Many returns of it to her! I shall produce some cake and wine to-night to do her honour. I generally remember all the birthdays in your family, but they are getting rather numerous to make holidays of. Still very cold. The weather makes Mr. Boyd more persuadable, and he is still here, but, in order not to lose time, manufacturing a pair of snow-boots of John's kersey. John only waits the result to make a pair too. He has cut out a great deal of work for himself. A cap, a waistcoat, a pair of gaiters, and these snow-boots. His comfort ought to be complete before the New Year, as he will be away, I am afraid, for some weeks afterwards. One arbitration comes on the beginning of January, the other towards the end of that month, and the District Council again early in February. Mr. Need was balloted out; John was not so fortunate. Mr. Need's deafness, which is much

increased, makes him very unfit for the post of council man.

*Wednesday, November 30.*—Mr. Boyd left us this morning, and I do not think that John would have enjoyed his society much had he remained another day, for he is suffering to-night from rheumatism in his head, *alias* ague. I slipped away, unknown to John, after tea, and down to his house to put up his winter canopy, for the winds find such ready entrance into his house that such a shelter is quite necessary. I wish it had been fixed up sooner. When he is not well it is very dismal turning him out at nights; but he is very averse to leaving his own house, even for a time.

We have more snow, and the wind drifting it, so that the pathway was quite invisible, and I have seldom floundered through deeper drifts than to-night.

*Thursday, November 31.*—John is better this morning. Two applications for quinine convince us that ague is still stirring, notwithstanding the frost. This is unusual, and Canadians say that the species of ague we have had this year is much worse than ordinary ague. Some attribute it to the raising of our waters, and say we shall always have it; others assure us that everywhere it has been more prevalent than usual this year, so we hope to fare better another year. My mother's headaches continue, though not so severe, at least not so incessant. Aunt Alice is but middling.

I think it is high time that I should more particularly introduce you to Master "Bruin," our Newfoundland dog, for he is beginning to be a decided character, and at any rate seems to intend to make a great noise in the world, treating us to as many howlings and yellings as little "Fury" used to do. Nevertheless, he is gaining great favour amongst us, and runs no small chance of being a little bit spoiled. He has had a narrow escape,

the whole weight of John's piece of kersey having come down upon him. At first he appeared seriously hurt, but I think now he will be no worse. The name he has received is very appropriate, his shaggy coat and broad paw quite entitling him to the appellation.

*Friday, December 1.*—There is a pile of hams and bacon ready for salting to-morrow, which looks like anything but a famine, but the larder presents a very different spectacle to what it did last year. There is neither beef nor mutton, the remains only of one solitary haunch of venison; nor have the woods furnished us with either pigeons or partridges this year, but there is plenty of pork! We had our newspapers from the post to-day, and one thing we see in them which makes us feel very anxious for further and more direct intelligence—Foster and Langton's suspension of payments. I trust it is only a temporary embarrassment, but we shall feel very uneasy until we learn the particulars of the case, especially how it affects my Uncle Zachary.

*Saturday, December 2.*—Once more I must take my leave of you, having now completed the twelfth journal. I can scarcely believe that I have given you the record of a whole year—at different times. You will see that times are somewhat changed since I commenced these scribblings. Many things are more complete and comfortable around us, and though some things are taken off our hands by the increase of our establishment, yet there remain an abundance of cares and occupation. The details I have entered less into than formerly, for there is much sameness in them, and when there is no novelty to recommend them, they are certainly not generally ornamental to my page. I have, however, rather a new occupation now before me, at least new in this country,—to work for a bazaar. I am not at all

interested in the object of it, but am very glad to oblige an acquaintance and favourite of John's. I shall do one or two drawings, and perhaps some other trifles, but not much. My chair, which I took out two evenings, may lie by again until after Christmas.

I must not forget to tell you that the anemones are beginning to come up. They inhabit my apartment, whose temperature with its dumb stove is delightful. We are inclined to think that we have run into a contrary extreme with our dahlia roots this year, and let them dry too much. We have them packed in sand; I shall be anxious to see the result. John's ague still hangs about him, but not so as to make him an invalid. Aunt Alice looks ill, and has lost her appetite. My mother is very deaf, and myself with a little cold, but not of any consequence. I often consider how thankful I ought to be for the health I enjoy. My mother is feeling very anxious on your account, lest the agitation that seems to exist in the commercial world should have added to your anxieties, now that Sir Benjamin's indifferent health leaves you even more than your usual weight of responsibility.

In a letter dated November 19, 1842, our grandmother mentions her own state of health, her headaches, sometimes violent, resulting in a feeling of internal soreness, her deafness increasing, and her physical powers failing. She describes herself as sitting in her chair much more than formerly, with her little table before her, with a little work, and a little reading. She mentions their pleasure on the arrival of newspapers of various kinds from England, and also local. And she follows, as she always had done, English politics with keen interest.

An anecdote is given to show the independent spirit of the people about them. Aunt Anne had told her brother's man that she should want him and the boat to go up to Fenelon Falls. He replied that another man was going up with a load of wheat, and could take her!

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1843

EXTRACTS from a LETTER, dated February 11, 1843.

"WE have had a stirring time since our last letter left a week ago. On Sunday a party of Dunsfords, three gentlemen and Miss Dunsford, went up to church to take their guest, Miss Clarke,<sup>1</sup> to Mr. Fidler's, and after leaving her there drove down with us to dinner before going home. Such a peppering storm of wind and snow had overtaken us that we did not let them proceed, and the weather continued so bad that they all remained with us until Tuesday. On that day John went down to meet and bring up Mr. Need, who had promised us a visit, and shortly after they had appeared two other gentlemen arrived, strangers, one personally the other entirely. Of this last we should yet have known nothing but the name, Keeting, had not Mr. Need whispered that he was an Indian Chief. He was a thorough Englishman, nevertheless, but he had married a Chief's daughter, was adopted by him, and was now himself Chief of the tribe, and at present on an expedition amongst the Indians. We soon found that he was intimately acquainted with the Indians and their language, but so he was also with

<sup>1</sup> The Miss Clarke alluded to had been a neighbour of the Dunsford family in Gloucestershire. My Aunt Anne kept up a friendship with her after they were both in England.

other peoples and their languages, being evidently a traveller, and a man of the world. His conversation was very amusing, and you may suppose in quite a different style from what proceeds from the Canadian farmer, engrafted upon the schoolboy, and of this last class are most of our young men.

"All these remained with us until Friday, when John accompanied them down, as he had to go to Cobourg again before the meeting of the Council. The gentleman who came with Mr. Keeting was a Mr. Mackechnie, a friend both of Mr. Wallis and Richard Atthill. Our company is not quite at an end, for Mr. Fidler is to bring down Miss Clarke on Tuesday for a night on her way to the Beehive.

Some good hints in cookery appear to have been obtained from the Indian Chief, who professed himself "a capital cook."

EXTRACTS from LETTER, dated April 14, 1843.

"Ten days since we had experienced no interruption to the rigours of our winter. It had continued to freeze, to snow, and especially to blow, almost without intermission, until the fourth of this month, since which the accumulations of drift have been disappearing so rapidly under a hot sun that we promise ourselves in another ten days to be busily employed in our gardens. This sudden change has not suited my mother, and the constant succession of guests that we had during March was tiring for her. We had the Dennistouns and others for a night on their way to or from Peterboro, besides several strangers at different times. We have rather a large list of invalids for such a small number of families. We do not hear much of ague as

1843.

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yet, only a few cases, and mostly those who were suffering from it last year. The long continuance of severe weather and dry food, even when there is no scarcity of it, has been very unfavourable to the cattle in some places—not so here, but the little lambs have been dying almost as fast as they came into the world.

“The roads have been good for sleighing, and I made my *début* in driving the other day. John had more grist for the mill than he could take at once, so I volunteered to drive one load, whilst he drove the other. Our journey was performed very prosperously. A strange luminous appearance in the heavens has been seen by many at different times lately. John saw it twice while on his travels—a streak of light following the sun, neither resembling a comet nor zodiacal light. We have no wise men here to interpret it.”

EXTRACT from LETTER, dated May 25, 1843.

“We have had a beautiful spring. The enormous quantity of snow which remained undiminished until after April had begun, disappeared rapidly by evaporation with much less inconvenience than it usually does, and since its departure there has scarcely been a day when the business of the garden has been interrupted by weather. I am sorry to say that the ague prevails again, and the applications for quinine are as numerous as ever. John has an occasional touch of it, but only slight, and such as rarely interferes with his avocations. Our household, once unsettled, continues so at present. Neither Margaret's successor nor Timothy's are likely to remain. We intend to do without a boy this summer, and share with John in a man, who is already somewhat known to us, and who may accomplish the



little work we have about the house at this season without greatly interfering with his farm duties. Margaret was married in March, and since her husband took Mr. Boyd's farm he has lost twenty-one head of cattle, counting lambs, so they have not begun their married life prosperously. John's ewes, though never pinched for food, had scarcely any sustenance for their offspring, so the lambs have fared badly. We took one little lamb to rear, which has been a source of interest and amusement the last month, and is now a wonderful pet. Aunt Alice is mourning over the disappearance of our cat, who, I fancy, has taken to the woods, as cats often do here. Mr. Boyd has had one nine years, which goes away every summer, and never shows itself until the approach of winter, when it returns as tame as ever, and takes to all its old habits again. Since the sleighing ended we have seen few visitors, nor did I get to church again until last Sunday. The lake has been very high, but has fallen sooner and more rapidly than usual."

The visit of the Bishop was this year one of the principal events—for a confirmation. The little church at Fenelon Falls was not yet consecrated, owing to some difficulty about funds. The church at Peterboro was likewise in difficulties, and there was a possibility that it might be shut up. Canada was at this time a very poor country, and public concerns were not well managed.

EXTRACTS from LETTER, dated November 18, 1843.

"We had some visitors during October—three of the Miss Dunsfords among the number. Now winter has taken us rather by surprise. Of Indian summer we

have not had a day this year, and very little fine weather since the first departure of summer. The frost has been continuous until these two last days, when the lake has opened again, with wind and rain. I fancy a little open weather will be very acceptable, and enable people to get a little more of their autumn work done. My garden was never put by for the winter with so little order in it, partly on account of weather, partly the visitors, and partly the bad colds, which we all had together. The Falls is rather a melancholy looking place at present, so many families that had settled there gone.

"Wolves are very numerous this winter. They have visited our flock twice, and our neighbours do not fare better. We had a daylight exhibition of them the other day. We observed five or six, and watched them through the telescope, sporting most composedly in the meadow for at least half-an-hour."

In December the principal event was the cutting of a new road to Bobcaygeon, which would greatly facilitate the necessary journeys to Peterboro, and make travellers independent of the condition of the lake.

1844

NOTES FROM LETTERS DURING THE YEAR 1844

IN February my Aunt Anne paid a visit to the Beehive to officiate as bride's-maid at Caroline Dunsford's marriage to Mr. Boyd, and remained there a couple of days after it, her mother and aunt, she says, rather enjoying the novelty of being left to themselves. Some efforts were made to get rid of the wolves which haunted the clearings this winter. Unfortunately the lamb, which had been made such a great pet, disappeared one morning, and though followed by its tracks a few minutes later, had evidently gone to meet a wolf under the impression that it was one of the dogs, and had fallen a victim.

There were many changes among the old original settlers at this time, either by their abandoning their farms in despair of making them lucrative, and taking to other occupations, or by leaving the country altogether. The immediate neighbourhood of Blythe was somewhat deserted this year. The Wallis's and Dennistouns were living at Peterboro, Mr. Dundas had obtained an appointment from the Hudson Bay Company, and others were on the move. Mr. Need went to England at last, after much indecision, and was the bearer of my aunt's chair.

There was much complaint about the mismanagement of the post office department. Letters had been frequently lost owing to incapable and unreliable post-masters. This state of things was particularly felt at Blythe, owing to the anxiety about the health of the brother in England, who had gone early in the year to Italy for a few months. The letters from the Continent were specially interesting to my Aunt Anne, recalling, as they did, recollections of their sojourn there in their young days, when her brother John, now "careworn and bald," was *Jean le petit espiègle*.

The arrival safely of the marble bust of my grandfather was acknowledged.

Towards the end of the year ague attacks were frequent, and more or less acute. A sufferer describes the mysterious illness as sudden and unaccountable. One day perfectly delirious, with fever, acute headache, pain in the back and in all the limbs, the next going about his work apparently quite well, after an attack of violent perspiration. The next day again, almost unconscious of what was passing around him. Recovery was usually quick, and the symptoms of "shaking," supposed to be an invariable accompaniment, by no means so.

The following gives a vivid picture of backwoods' life, and for this reason worth notice. Apologising for the trouble given to his brother in forwarding money to intending emigrants from their relations, already in the colony, my uncle writes :—

"I am afraid that our neighbours are a great plague to you. I know they are to me. When it is known that I am going to Peterboro you would be astonished at the levees which I hold. One wants a pound of tea, another two yards of flannel, a third a pair of shoes,

with some incomprehensible peculiarity about the instep. The tea is not to be of the same kind as one of the two dozen different parcels which I brought out five months ago. I am to get a reduction on the flannel, because the calico I brought last spring was of bad quality. One man wants a slate pencil, for which he duly deposits a halfpenny, and another gives sevenpence halfpenny on account of his pound of tobacco; but the shoes, the flannel, the axe, and the sugar-kettle are sure to be on 'tick.' If John Bull's idea of paradise is, as Sydney Smith says, a land of short credit and cash payments, I should strongly recommend John Bull to stay at home."

My uncle was applied to on all occasions as the handy man, who could do anything, from making a boat to piecing on successfully a chopped-off finger.

1845

EXTRACTS AND NOTES FROM LETTERS OF 1845

EXTRACT from LETTER, dated January 10, 1845.  
Peterboro.

"I CAME down to stand godmother to Mr. Wallis' little boy—Henry Alexander. The ceremony took place yesterday. We had a sleigh drive in the afternoon. The day was beautiful, and I scarcely think that in Madeira you would be enjoying a milder air, and certainly not a brighter sun.<sup>1</sup> My time has been fully occupied with shopping and driving—very pleasantly, but I shall be very happy to get home again.

"I am amused by the needless pity bestowed upon us by the people here, who evidently think the seclusion of the woods something very dreadful. We had a gay and busy Christmas—contrary to expectations—and a large party on Christmas Day. Mr. Need brought a young friend.

"I went with some of the party to the Beehive, where the New Year was brought in with singing and dancing. The old ladies have kept well during my absence, and I am no worse for the unusual excitement, except that

<sup>1</sup> William Langton was, with his wife and a daughter, spending the winter in Madeira for his health.

I take back a little cold, which will make my dear mother shake her head as if I had done something very wrong indeed, and was not fit to be trusted out of her sight."

In a letter of February 17, my uncle announces his engagement to Miss Lydia Dunsford.

Early in the year, in March, my grandmother had another very serious attack of illness, of the same nature as the previous one, with much fever and prostration of strength. The amount of calomel ordered by the Peterboro doctor alarmed her faithful attendants. A less quantity was thought desirable, and she did not suffer from the effects in the same way.

In April my grandmother began to mend, and throughout the illness her mind was quite clear, but the amendment was broken by relapses. Aunt Alice was also more or less of an invalid.

The marriage took place on May 8—a quiet family wedding—the brothers of the bride rowing the newly-married couple from the Beehive up to Blythe. Aunt Alice had been hoping that the wedding would be fixed for the 27th—the anniversary of the marriage of their father and mother, just one hundred years before—in 1745; but it was not found convenient. Mr. and Mrs. Dunsford had lately moved to Peterboro, leaving the eldest son, James, in possession of the Beehive, with a sister.

The society on Sturgeon lake was at the time greatly reduced—Mr. James Dunsford and Mr. Boyd alone remaining. The Hamiltons and others were all dispersed. My uncle and his wife, however, had no intention of deserting the place. Lumberers were at this time moving further back, and their neighbourhood promised to be good for the sale of farm produce.

In July the cold, unkindly weather is remarked, which was a disadvantage for garden and farm, but spared them the mosquitos. The weather was hot again in August, but all through the summer was variable. The family entertained a few visitors during the summer, but the health of the two old ladies necessitated quiet, and caused my Aunt Anne much anxiety.

The domestic difficulties were still pressing, and their old servant, Mary Scarry, was called in to help towards the end of the year. Mention is made of the incident of the little girl who was lost in the woods for seven days, as related in *The Story of our Family*. She eventually found her way home with the little dog, that she had kept carefully wrapt up in her shawl, and which probably by the warmth of its body at night saved her life; but neither of them had had any food during the time—only water to drink.

The marriage of the eldest Miss Dunsford with Mr. Wickham is mentioned as taking place in the autumn at Peterboro. My uncle and his wife went down to be present on the occasion.

NOTES from a LETTER of February 8, 1845.

As an illustration of backwoods' hospitality, I may mention my Aunt Anne's description of a visit they had early in February from Colonel Cotter and his three daughters, two other ladies, and three young men, who were of course sleeping at my uncle's house. The rest of the party were accommodated at Blythe for a night, and were to have gone down to the Beehive the next day. A storm had, however, arisen which rendered their doing so quite impossible. The wind



was extremely violent, and also so very cold that extra good fires were lighted, with the result that the drawing-room chimney took fire early the next morning. It was extinguished by the exertions of Colonel Cotter and the young men from my uncle's house, but what with the water, which had been freely used, and the running backwards and forwards, the room was in a great mess, and it took some time to get things straight again. The following day other guests joined the party from Fenelon Falls, and there was some dancing and games in the evening. It was not until the sixth day that the weather allowed the party to proceed to the Falls. My Aunt Anne remarks that the consumption of firewood during the week was "awful," and her own difficulties and anxieties as to feeding and housing such a multitude must have been great, with only two young servants to assist.

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1846

JOURNAL, April 1846

I AM perhaps going to give you another journal after the fashion of the old ones. I say perhaps, because, though actually making a commencement, I have strong misgivings as to the events of the month furnishing a satisfactory result. I stopped my journals before because they were becoming commonplace, and I have little expectation that these will be otherwise. To begin then.

*Thursday, April 2.*—There is certainly no novelty in the opening of the month, for it has found me at the old employment of candle-making.

The increased facility of John's machine<sup>1</sup> made me think that it would be profitable to manufacture on a larger scale instead of merely using up our own tallow, or an occasional cake purchased from a neighbour. So John brought me up 54 lbs. of tallow, and I was pleased this morning after two days' work to weigh up 49 lbs. of candles, having  $5\frac{1}{4}$  lbs. of tallow left. This business may account for my beginning my journal on the second instead of the first of the month.

This morning I made my first round of the garden to see what signs of life appeared there. Tulips and

<sup>1</sup> An illustration of this invention is given in *The Story of Our Family*.

hyacinths are above ground in most places, and if this weather continues the garden will be ready for me before I am ready for the garden.

*Friday, April 3.*—Rather an unsettled and busy day. Both the servants went to the Falls, and what with helping them on in the morning, and supplying their place in the afternoon, I was pretty well occupied. I could not help thinking how soon one unlearns a good lesson. Considering how often we have been without servants, as much as for five weeks at once, I thought a wondrous deal of baking bread and getting tea ready. It is to be hoped one would learn the good lesson again pretty easily if occasion required. My mother is very indifferent this evening. She has had a bad cough these last few days, and to-night is gone to bed very feverish. The cough sounds almost like whooping-cough, and shakes her sadly. Aunt Alice has a cold, at least her breathing is very indifferent.

*Saturday, April 4.*—My mother still very poorly, and under the effects of calomel. Aunt Alice pretty well again, I quietly proceeding with my needlework upstairs. The work progresses, and I think I have nearly completed the share I intend to take, for spring brings a multitude of other cares with it. John's favourite cat is ill, and I have been afraid that she is going to die, as misfortunes never come alone, and last week we lost both our pet dogs. It was a day of great lamentation when poor little "Nettle's" existence was terminated, but it was best that it should be so. A mad dog had chosen to come and die at our door one night. Both the dogs had at least had opportunity of coming in contact with it, so they were closely watched, and suspicious symptoms showing themselves in one, John thought it best to destroy both. It cost him a sore struggle to part with his devoted little favourite, and he

spared us the pain of sharing it, only telling us when the deed was done. The other dog was a beautiful terrier, but a commoner character among dogs, and not such an old established friend of the house as poor old "Nettle." Old she was getting, and this is one comfort. Hitherto she had had as happy a life as any little dog could have, and death came upon her unawares in the midst of happiness and enjoyment.

*Sunday, April 5.*—An anxious day, my mother still feverish, very weak, and languid, and at night has difficulty in expressing herself, and occasional rambling of the mind, denoting still increasing fever. Mr. James Dunsford came in the evening, and stayed the night.

*Monday, April 6.*—My mother a little better to-day, being relieved by sleep and perspiration, and well enough to take an interest in the day, and be anxious for rather a better dinner in honour of John's birth. I did my best, therefore, on very small materials. The usual party on this day falls through for lack of numbers, for it is really no compliment to ask people to come over very bad roads, without either good company or a good dinner to offer, and this is the very worst season of the year to provide the latter. At present provisions are at their lowest ebb. We are without fresh meat, the pork is done, for as we overstocked ourselves last year, of course we rather understocked ourselves this year. We have no bacon but what is two years old, and this year's hams are most indifferent, owing either to impure salt or impure molasses, or some other unknown cause. In general we shine in this article, and we have a small reserve of better ones, which, being the only good thing in the house, we use carefully. Milk and butter will not be plentiful for a month to come, eggs are our chief luxury, and with these we make as much variety as we can.

After all, I suppose the scarcity of the season is not regarded so much by anybody except the housekeeper, whose ingenuity is tasked to spread a decent table before the family. Sometimes, on the contrary, we are oppressed by plenty, as, for instance, when we had six sheep killed all at once. You will wonder why they are not killed off more by degrees. The fact was that the sheep were fat, and fodder much too scarce to keep them so, and I must say that the last joint of mutton was as good as the first. We had beef, veal, and poultry to dispose of at the same time. I must tell you that Mary weighed up 52 lbs. of nice fresh soap with as much pride as I counted over my candles, and indeed it is a much more satisfactory operation altogether. Soap-boiling approaches nearer to creating than anything I know. You put into your pot the veriest dirt and rubbish, and take out the most useful article.

*Tuesday, April 7.*—I need not say more than that this was *washing day*, a word of most comprehensive meaning, well understood by all householders. My cares below-stairs divided my attention with my cares above-stairs, and these did not diminish. My mother is still very feverish, and the expectation and the receipt of the English letters were too exciting for her. We had given her calomel again to-day, though we always do it with fear and trembling.

*Wednesday and Thursday, April 8 and 9.*—We gave my mother a little quinine both these days with good effect as to the fever, which no longer returned with the same force; but she is very weak and uncomfortable, and very weary, and worn out at night. The cough is most harassing at times. She has been very much interested with the proceedings in India, but she is not able to amuse herself with reading the papers, as

her eyes partake of the general weakness of her frame. She has now pain in the face and head, which I fear we must attribute to the two doses of calomel, but I do not apprehend anything approaching to salivation.

*Friday, April 10 (Good Friday).*—A black, raw day, sometimes snowing, sometimes raining. The early part of the week was almost like summer. On John's birthday we dined with open windows, but we have had severe frost since. I am watching with anxiety a plant of lavender, my only remaining one. Last winter those out of doors died, so I took all into the house but one this winter. They had done well within doors before, but now they have sickened and died in the house. The one left out is my sole hope, and I can say but little for its vitality. We sometimes attempt to keep more plants than we have good light for, nor can we secure for them an even temperature. My mother's rose-trees flourish better than anything else. I counted twenty-five buds and flowers in the drawing-room windows this morning.

*Saturday, April 11.*—My mother had another feverish night, but appears nevertheless somewhat better this evening. Her cough is bad, and the weather very cold, snowing and blowing cruelly to-night. Mr. Wickham arrived in the evening, having been three days in travelling up from Peterboro. Yesterday he was nearer home than he is now, but finding bad ice where he had hoped to cross the lake, he was compelled to go all round by the Falls. As he stays the night here it will be the fourth day before he reaches home. This is just the season when we are the most perfectly quiet, as everybody stays at home that can do so. We measure the increase of open water, and speculate on the day when the last ice will vanish, but not with the deep interest with which the subject was discussed last

year, when John's wedding had been fixed for a month after the lakes opened. However, he did not wait so long for it.

*Sunday, April 12 (Easter Sunday).*—My mother had a better night, but is weak and languid. We must not expect her at eighty to rally as quickly as a younger person. She is just now asleep on a small sofa which we got carpenter Taylor to manufacture a little time since, and which she finds a great comfort in her own room. The cover for it she made, with a little assistance from Aunt Alice, entirely herself, and it would do credit to any upholsterer.

*Monday, April 13.*—My mother, I think, more decidedly improves, though she has abundant sources of discomfort from cold and weakness. The weather continues severe, and she is very sensitive to the cold, and thought she had never been so thoroughly starved as to-day. This little return to winter in some respects suits me, for as I could neither attack the garden or the spring cleaning at present, it is as well not to have the temptation. I pity the poor hyacinths, which must wish themselves back in England.

*Tuesday, April 14.*—The people are beginning to come round with their sugar to sell, all wanting to get fivepence a pound for it, whereas fourpence has been the regular price the last year or two. I bought some to-day for fourpence halfpenny, and was amused with the gracious, flattering manner in which the man came down in his price, saying, "Well, I would not for a halfpenny give the sugar to anybody else if you wanted it." The sugar-making season generally brings us in some of our smaller debts. At present we have more than £80 owing to us, from loans and other things. Amongst these debts is the fortune of the little girl whose father was drowned in the regatta, and which has

hitherto all come out of our pocket. This requires explanation, and the circumstances are illustrative of the state of things in this country.

The collection was set on foot by Mr. Rubidge, and he in the first place received the money and the contents of the prize purse. A year or more passing without anything being heard of it, John, feeling he had no more business than any other person to make an enquiry, told Jordan, the grandfather of the child, to write him a note requesting him to enquire about it, which note became his authority for doing so. Mr. Rubidge, on being asked, thought he had paid the money to Mr. Langton, but on further tasking his memory discovered that it was to Mr. Kirkpatrick. The lawyer present on the occasion, on application to this gentleman, found that at first he remembered nothing at all about it, but finally it was distinctly recalled to his recollection that he had received the money, but how much neither he nor anybody else could tell. To find out the sum was difficult; the subscription list was forthcoming, but everybody knew that it was quite common for names of persons to be put down who never paid. This was therefore no guide. Finally, Mr. Kirkpatrick agreed to consider it twenty-five pounds, and paid it by making over to John and Mr. Wallis, as trustees, two debts due to himself. Meanwhile John met with a single bank share, which is not often to be obtained, and he purchased it for the child, and we remained the creditors. How long we shall continue creditors remains to be seen. John succeeded in screwing ten dollars the other day out of one of the people, which is the first we have seen of the money owing.

*Wednesday, April 15.*—Greeting to Anna Margaret on the entrance into her tenth year! How time flies! It seems but the other day since I held her, a wee little



baby, in my arms at church. It is to-day more like Christmas than Easter.

*Thursday, April 16.*—My mother complains of an acute pain in one side, connected with her breathing, the consequence probably of this very severe cold. I am very busy upstairs, and John and Lydia may almost fancy they have the house to themselves. John put a young horse into harness for the first time, and he went as steadily to his work as if he had been at it the whole of his life. We watched him dragging alongside the old one, and there was not a bit of difference. All the domestic animals seem tamer in this country than at home. It may be on account of the long winters when they are kept close about the place.

*Friday, April 17.*—You have been duly thought of and talked of already, and there are some little cakes in readiness to accompany the glass of wine to-night in which your health will be drunk. I daresay with your family growing up around you, you feel much older than I do. I observed that it seemed only the other day since Anna Margaret was born; but there are other periods of my life which seem even more remote than they really are, and when I look back at all the various stages of my existence I wonder that I am not more of an old woman than I am. We had Mr. Fidler here to-day to give us the Sacrament, and my mother came down for the first time. The weather has changed again, and it is almost like summer. My mother likewise honoured us with her company at dinner. The pain in her side is better again. We had the luxury of a partridge pie. Mr. Hamilton, who is hunting on the other side of the lake, took advantage of the first open water to bring us a few birds across. Though the water is open here, or rather a little above us, I

suppose it will be some days yet before the ice disappears on the main part of the lake. I have been just called down to a little girl, who had brought back some sewing she had done for us, and for whom we feel much interested. Her mother died in her confinement last year, leaving this poor girl of ten years of age with several younger brothers and sisters to take care of. My mother paid for a six months' nursing-out of the little delicate baby, and it is now a thriving, healthy child. Another woman died under the same circumstances, literally of cold, and the baby was, while in the charge of another woman, found one morning outside the family group in bed, and frozen to death. This was on one of our coldest nights this winter. Mr. William Hamilton and Mr. Beresford came in the afternoon, stayed the night, and assisted in drinking your health.

*Wednesday, April 22.*—On Saturday I wrote to you, and also to Jane Birley, and had no time left for my journal. On Sunday Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Beresford spent the day with us. The ice has all vanished from this part of the lake, and the weather is beautiful. My mother improves very much, and the energy, the lack of which she complained, has only returned in too great force, for she does more than her strength allows.

Yesterday she made preparations for potting and transplanting rose-trees, but tired herself sadly. She has begun to dine with us again.

To-day I commenced gardening in good earnest; planted my dahlia roots in boxes, which we must keep about another month in the house for fear of frosts, though such a sweet summer day as this has been makes it hard to believe that any need be apprehended. My dahlia roots remind me of poor little "Nettle," who, one year when they were all shooting up beautifully,

spent a delightfully happy night in rooting them all up and tearing them to pieces! Mr. Hamilton brought us a little fish, a luxury we do not often see, though living amongst lakes.

My mother had a visit from her little *protégée*, the baby before mentioned. It is the first time that she has seen it; the sister, poor child, looked pleased and proud of it.

*Thursday, April 23.*—I suppose there is a certain pleasure in communicating ill news (which may account for its flying so fast). I could be amused at the eager haste with which our maiden, Susan, reports any calamity to me, coming to my bedside, and rousing me to hear her news. This morning my awakening senses were greeted with, "Miss Langton, you know old Lansfield, well! he is drowned." Old Lansfield has a young wife and family. At present these tidings are mere report. It was once reported at Peterboro that John was drowned, and when he walked into the town he was stared at as if he had been a ghost. He had left Bobcaygeon in his canoe for Peterboro on a very stormy day, and had been met on his way thither. The wind at length became so strong that he was obliged to put his canoe to shore, in a part of it which made access to Peterboro not easy; so he crossed the woods to another township, where he had an acquaintance, and had to wait there two days before the storm subsided and he could pursue his journey. Meanwhile Mr. Need had gone down to Peterboro, and as John had not been seen or heard of, little doubt of a fatal catastrophe remained in the minds of any of his friends, who were accordingly preparing to seek for his body when he made his appearance.

*Friday, April 24.*—This morning we had the poor man here who, as I related, had lost both wife and

child from cold. Since his wife died one of the boys had a bad cut with his axe, taking off one toe, and very nearly another. Then a tree fell upon their cow and killed it, and now the eldest child, a girl, has scalded her foot with boiling sap. We had a little bundle of old and new clothing for the family, and the way in which the old man tendered his thanks, such a contrast to the vociferous humbug of the Irish, was touching. He paused, as if at a loss what to say, and then silently held out his hand to each of us.

*Saturday and Sunday, April 25 and 26.*—Two perfectly uneventful days, occupations not detailable. My mother is much as usual again, but complains of want of strength, and fatigue after any slight exertion.

*Monday, April 27.*—The only interesting event to-day for me was the sight of an old pupil, grown into a man.

*Wednesday, April 29.*—Yesterday I spent a good part of the day in gardening, and had to lament the demise of the lavender plant.

Being wet to-day we devoted our energies to cutting out work, of which there is plenty of one sort or another before us. There is bedding to be overhauled, pillows to fill, mattresses to take to pieces and remake, and a new one to manufacture. I well remember the last time we had this work to do. We were in the midst of hair and wool, when our only servant fell ill, and besides the business on hand, and no assistance except that of a little girl, who was helping to pull the wool, we had the invalid to nurse and sit up with. It was a right busy time.

*Thursday, April 30.*—You would have been surprised to see my mother this morning, lately so ill and so weak, and complaining of want of energy. I had set about some store-room tidying, and she was determined to give me her assistance. Literally she

never sat down from breakfast till dinner. Aunt Alice shakes her head at me when she does in this way, but I have it not in my power to prevent her, and can only hope she will not suffer. This day brings the somewhat uninteresting month to an end.

May to September 1846.

In May my uncle took his wife to Peterboro, where her parents were now living, and where early in July their first child, a daughter, was born. The child only survived a fortnight. During their absence began the terrible visitation of ague and fever, which was long remembered in the Lake district. New forest settlements are all subject to such visitations at a certain period of their history. The miasma is generated from decaying vegetation. When the forest is cleared to a certain extent, and sunshine is let in upon a sufficiently large tract of country, then the evaporation, which is comparatively harmless while under the shadow of its own woods, becomes baneful. Time only, with the increase of the area of cultivation, bringing purer air, can remedy the evil, and render the country again healthy. In the case of the district round Sturgeon lake the evil was made worse by the fact that the waters of the lake had been raised by the construction of a dam and locks at Bobcaygeon. A great deal of land near the lake shores was submerged, so that in dry seasons, when the water was low, there was an immense amount of new decaying matter exposed to the sun. Two seasons of this state of things resulted in a visitation of ague, intensified into fever. Of the Blythe party my Aunt Anne was first taken ill, then my grandmother, on her eightieth birthday (July 25th). Already in feeble health, she

succumbed to the fever, and died on August 1. Their old servant, Mary Scarry, who was then with them, was sent for across the lake to her mother, who died after a few days' illness. They were left with only a girl of sixteen to help them, and she was off and on ill with ague. My uncle had, of course, returned to Blythe on hearing of my grandmother's illness. The harvest was coming on, and two of my uncle's friends came from Camerons Lake to assist him in getting it in, but before long all farm work had to be abandoned, all the men and their families being prostrated with either ague or fever.

The following letter, dated September 17 and 19, gives a vivid picture of that time of trial and difficulty.

EXTRACTS from a LETTER, dated Thursday,  
September 17, 1846.

"I am sorry to report that both Aunt Alice and I have the ague. My aunt has been very weak and ill the last few days, and I have apprehended something of this sort. It will be very trying to her, with the small amount of strength she has wherewith to combat disease. Yesterday we were both in our beds in a miserable state, and as we neither of us have thrown off the fever sufficiently to venture upon quinine, we must anticipate a repetition of the same suffering to-morrow. It is more genuine ague with me this time than the last. On my well days I can go about my accustomed duties, but between times can do nothing.

"It is bad for us to fall ill together, but it would have been still more unfortunate had it happened last week, for our little maiden had the ague then. Mr. Hamilton was here, too, and we had Mr. Dennistoun

and a gentleman from Cobourg staying the night. We have still many new cases, and another death in our neighbourhood, that of an elderly person, whose illness in its nature and duration seemed very similar to that of my dear mother.

"John's man, Henry's case was pretty severe, but he is now mending very nicely. The people generally look something like the poor wretches that thronged about us at Pæstum—William will remember them, and I daresay you saw something of it in the fever districts in Italy. They say that there has not been such a year as this since the year 1827, when it was still worse. There have been more deaths on the other side of the lake. In some respects we are better off from having four families habitually provided with some medicines. In some settlements there is nobody near to apply to, and the poor creatures have nothing to do but to lie down, and let the fever take its course. One widow woman, living alone, was found to have been dead two or three days by the neighbours.

"There is no end to melancholy details. We have another fever case just now. A man that John engaged two days since, when Henry fell ill.

"The other man working here took himself off for fear of infection. John had engaged this man to do his ploughing, and the first thing he had to do was to take the horses a two days' journey to get shod, one blacksmith being laid up. Now he has just come home with the ague. Whole families are down with ague or fever, and perhaps no one to look after them but a neighbour, a mile away, herself in a stage of ague. One great lamentation among the sick has been the difficulty of getting any washing done. John was called upon last week to read the funeral service, as Mr. Fidler had gone away for change of air. A great

part of this month we have had extremely hot weather. However, I am thankful to say that the mosquitos are all over. They have been a dreadful plague this summer. I never knew them so numerous. Fleas have now taken their place, which abound in the same extraordinary degree.

"Complaints of this inelegant misery come from other parts of the country. It is a misery likely to be much increased where people are too sick to do any scrubbing and cleaning. Up to this time we have not fallen into arrears in this essential comfort, but I dread it every day, for the house has too many conveniences not to have that one great inconvenience—of requiring a great deal of cleaning.

"*Saturday, September 19.*—Yesterday was just such a day as we had to expect—John convalescent, Aunt Alice a case of fever. She was in a distressing state of restless uneasiness the whole day, but she is decidedly better to-day, and her strength keeps up much better than I expected, considering her general debility. John went down to try to get our former servant, Margaret, but she had all her children ill. There is not a person anywhere round whom it is possible to get. I took quinine to-day, but fear that it will not prevent to-morrow's visitation. As long as I am up I can look after Aunt Alice, and our young servant manages some way or other, but when I am down it is difficult for a girl of sixteen to do the churning, baking, washing, etc., and make tea and gruel every hour of the day. Aunt Alice then cannot have all the attention she requires, for our worst hours are at the same time. John's new man is a decided case of fever, so here we have him to nurse for five or six weeks, I daresay. But what is worse, Henry's wife (Angel Brandon) is beginning to be ill herself. She





BLYTHE.

*From a photograph recently taken.*

thinks that it will only prove ague. All her children are ill, Henry but just out of the fever, as weak as possible, and a sister of his also ill in the house. The boy Billy keeps well so far. Every hour brings something fresh, now my girl is ill again. John had intended to go over the lake to try to get Mary Scarry, but we hear that she is in the fever. Now the last woman about the place is on the sick list, and it is much more difficult to let women's work stand still than men's work. John had made up his mind that nothing could be done on the farm, but no bread! no butter! no clean clothes!—this is another matter."

My uncle adds:—

"Although all this sounds very dreadful, it is astonishing how we keep up our spirits. There is something absurd in the very inconveniences which we are exposed to. The idea of Billy and me having to cook, milk the cows, etc., and attend upon two men, five women, and three children, all more or less ill of ague and fever, has a good deal of the ludicrous in it. The thing that now most alarms me is that I only know in this neighbourhood three men who would be able to take a boat down to Peterboro, and if I get ill, and Lydia has to be sent for to nurse us all, what am I to do if those three last hopes fall ill too! We will hope for better times."

September to November 1846.

Times did mend finally, but the troubles were not over. The day after this letter was concluded—on September 20—the invalid's strength gave way suddenly, and she died, just six weeks after her sister. She was laid to rest in Fenelon churchyard, on September 22, and a few days later my Aunt Anne

left Blythe for the very necessary change of air and scene. She went to Peterboro, where, until the middle of October, she was the guest of her friends Mr. and Mrs. Wallis. My uncle followed her later, when the invalids about the place were sufficiently recovered to allow of his leaving them, and in October they all returned to Blythe.



BLYTHE.  
BACK VIEW.

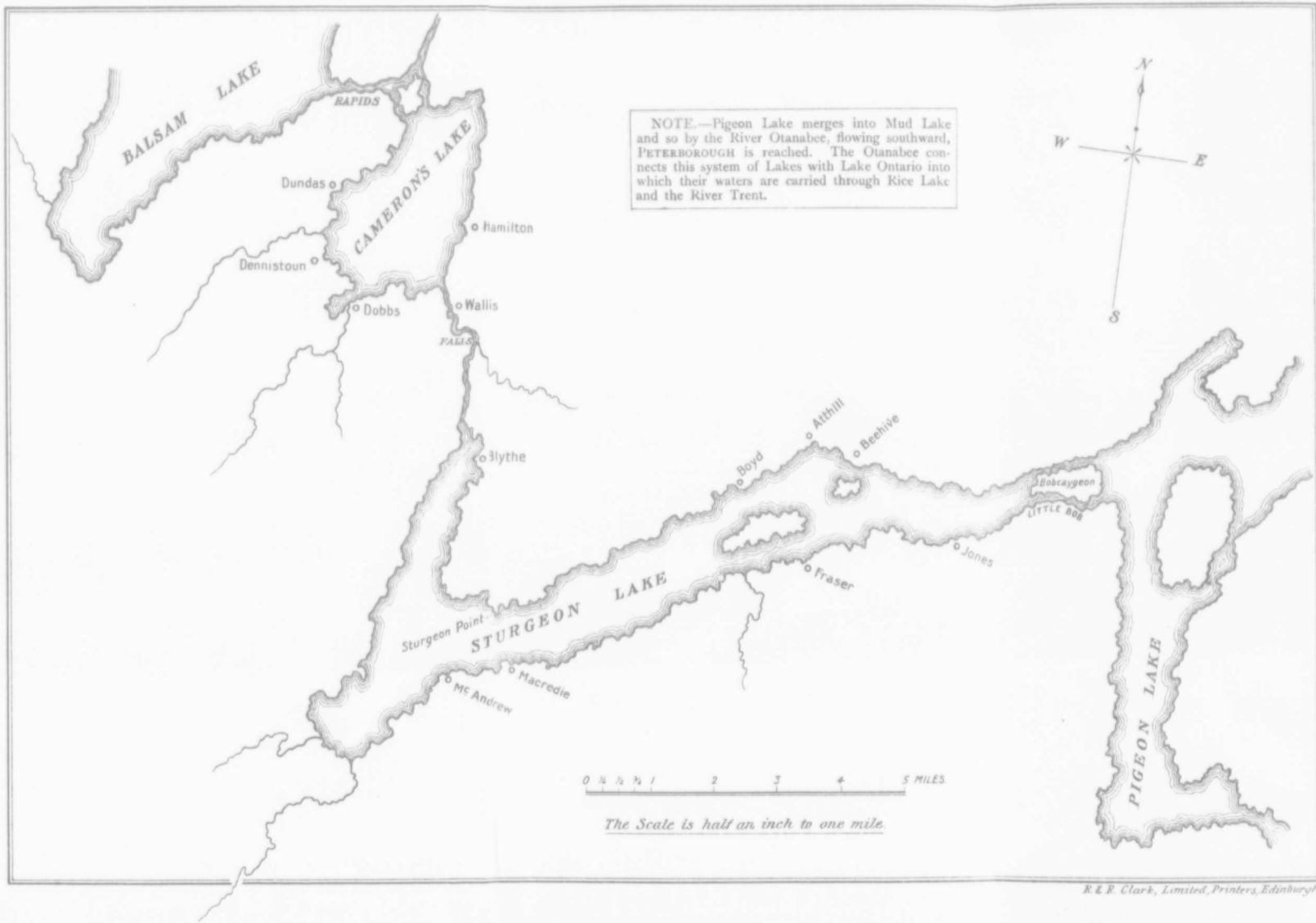
*From a photograph recently taken.*

1847

IN June 1847 they all sailed for England, my uncle and his wife to return after a short stay of three weeks, my Aunt Anne to remain for nearly three years. The readers of this narrative will remember that my Aunt Anne then returned to make her home with her brother John in Canada, but undertook frequent voyages to England for visits of varying length. Her last visit was in June 1880, returning the following September.

My aunt Anne Langton died at Toronto on May 10, 1893.





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*N. B.*—In this Index the more casual and trifling references to the names comprised in it are omitted.



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