

*Life From Old Letters*

1794 - 1886

*From the Correspondence of  
Samuel Thompson, John Isaac Hawkins,  
Alpheus Tod, Mary Thomson,  
John A. Macdonald and Others*

*Edited by*

*R.T.F. Thompson  
University of Victoria*



LIFE FROM OLD LETTERS

1794 - 1886

by

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The author acknowledges the assistance of  
the University of Victoria in the publication  
of this research into interesting aspects of  
the life and letters of the period

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University of Ottawa

1794 - 1886

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by

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(Formerly Editor of the "Toronto Daily Colonist", the Parliamentary Handsard, etc.)

Published 1884 by Hunter, Rose & Company (Toronto)

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## P R E F A C E

Any person who has devoted his life and energies to the education of the young, as the editor of this collection of nineteenth century letters has done, is aware of the fact that schooling is a minority force in the formation of youth. Nevertheless, there develops in such an intelligent observer of the human drama an awareness of the great social forces that make our history, an awareness and appreciation of certain values and of certain traditions and how adaptable these are to our present changing world. Herein lies the intellectual genesis of the present volume.

This collection of letters, belonging to Samuel Thompson, the author of the famous "Thompson's Mirror of Parliament" (forerunner of our Hansard) and "Reminiscences of a Pioneer" (Toronto, 1884), illustrates many facets of the social and intellectual foundations of our nation. It brings into focus some of the values and attitudes that were the bedrock upon which the New Nation was built. There is no single theme running through the letters but the reader may discover a common motif. Did John Hawkins, the Todds, Sir John A. Macdonald and Samuel Thompson have anything in common? Without fear of contradiction one may assert they were all activists. Students of the past are sharply divided on the role of philosophical ideas and literary works upon political and social events. Whatever position the reader may take on this issue, it is undeniable that there is some correlation between ideas and ideals and the main events of a period of history. He who knows something of Canadian history in the nineteenth century will re-discover this connection in perusing these letters.

Social history is still in its infancy. But of all historical

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writing or compilation it is probably the most relevant, enjoyable and instructive because it alone among the various types of history comprehends the diverse and divergent forces in interaction in human society which go to make up the human experience. It can be written only from the records of the life of those who preceded us and who were eye-witnesses and participants. The present work is a significant contribution to that account of our living tradition.

The letters indicate the same deep concern shared by the editor and this writer for the principles upon which our national and individual greatness rest. More specifically, the selection of letters from a very large collection indicates the editor's own predilection for intellectual honesty, for reverence of individual liberties and toleration, for character-building in education, for moral and humane aspirations and objectives in all dealings with one's fellow human creatures.

Cornelius J. Jaenen

University of Ottawa

July, 1968

LIFE FROM OLD LETTERS

PART I

THE STORY AND PEOPLE BEHIND THE LETTERS

Introduction by the Grandson

Within an old sea chest, in the family since 1834, the editor came across some five hundred letters and documents dated from 1794 to 1886. They had been written, received or collected by Samuel Thompson (1810-1886), Canadian journalist, first editor of "Parliamentary Hansard" and author of "Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer".\*

The old letters had been sorted and classified and many copied, by Frank W. Thompson, son of Samuel. Many years later, a member of the third generation, Ronald T.F. Thompson, on retirement, decided to read all these fading letters and manuscripts. He found much of the material surprisingly interesting, as reflections of an earlier day and of greatly differing ways of life. Several of the letter-series presented rather intriguing life histories, striking personal anecdotes and surprising contemporary opinions.

Presented in this little book are hundreds of colourful and significant passages selected from this correspondence, grouped around individuals, and chronologically arranged so as to provide a vivid picture of "Life from Old Letters".

Most of the epistles were written by relatives and friends to Samuel Thompson, but some sixty-five were the mutual correspondence of the Reverend Isaac Hawkins and his son, Dr. John Isaac Hawkins, inventor, benefactor, theologian and a rather unusual "Man of Genius" who was the uncle of Samuel Thompson, and who influenced the latter to emigrate to Canada.

Encyclopedia Canadiana reports on Samuel Thompson as follows:

\*"Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer" - by Samuel Thompson  
Published 1884 by Hunter, Rose & Co., Toronto  
Republished 1968 by McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto

"Journalist, born 1810 in London, England, died in Toronto July 8, 1886. Came to Canada 1833, established himself in Toronto as a journalist, and in 1838 founded the short-lived 'Palladium'. Later he was editor-publisher of the 'Herald', 'Daily Colonist' and 'News of the Week'. Having obtained a contract for government printing he moved to Quebec in 1859. There in 1860 he published 'Thompson's Mirror of Parliament', a forerunner of Hansard. In his later years he engaged in the insurance business. The year 1884 saw the publication of his autobiography 'Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer'."

Although the material found in "Life from Old Letters" is intended primarily to interest and to entertain, the selections provide a good deal of authentic contemporary background for the student of history. For this reason, a simple Index has been prepared listing the persons, objects and events referred to in any detail.

All of the original documents are in the hands of the editor, and typed copies or photostats of the original manuscripts could be made available.

The more detailed theological and political contents of the old manuscripts have been omitted. As a result our little book emphasizes the sociological facets of the period. Above all, "Life from Old Letters" presents the experiences, problems, joys and sorrows of human beings of earlier generations, just as they wrote them down in letters to their relatives and friends.

#### "My Father and his Reminiscences"

(Written Christmas Eve, 1928, by Frank W. Thompson to his son, Ronald, on the presentation to the four children of copies of Samuel Thompson's "Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer")

"It is only right that his grandchildren should have some record of the writer of this book, who died July 8, 1886, in my presence, fifteen years before any of you were born, and whom I only remember as a kindly old gentleman who was as interested as his limited time permitted in the schoolboy who was his only son.

"One must think of the three emigrants to Canada as young men. Thomas (1803-1885) was thirty, Isaac (1807-1886) was twenty-six, and Samuel (1810-1886) just twenty-three. The book was completed in 1884, and as a boy of ten, I saw it written. Your grandfather armed himself with reams of blue foolscap, spent the summer at my maternal aunt's farm near Ingersoll, and wrote in the orchard when weather permitted. He dearly loved the country, and particularly the woods and flowers. He was no mean water colourist and an accomplished musician and scholar.

"I saw little of the older brothers. They generally managed to get together on "Twelfth Night" and celebrated with whist, a little wine, and seed cake, wonderfully decorated with comfits. Isaac spent all his life on his farm at Meaford. The other brother, Thomas, was an accountant and ventured into business with little success.

"When the sisters, Sophia (1799-1885) and Anna (1805-1887) joined their brother in 1837 they were vigorous and independent persons with a little money. Neither married. Anna was a particularly beautiful woman, and played the 'grande dame' to perfection, but she always had a piece of preserved ginger or some other 'sweetie' for her small nephew.

"You will note the differences in style throughout the book. The chapter on Chopping was written before 1849. So, incidentally, was 'A Canadian Eclogue'. The latter indicates the ideas of a man under forty as to 'age' - but the 'Postscript' rings more true. Your grandfather was courageous to the last. At seventy-one he bought land at Saskatoon and planned to go there and farm, but fortunately for him the land company failed and his last years were spent amongst his Toronto friends as librarian of the Northern Branch of the Toronto Public Library. His wish to die in harness was granted."

Samuel Thompson's Autobiography  
(1810-1886)

A Profile History through Selected Quotations from his Autobiography

"Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer"

Published 1884 by Hunter, Rose & Co., Toronto

Republished 1968 by McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto

"The writer of these pages was born in the year 1810, in the City of London, within the sound of Bow-Bells. My grandfather was a Scotsman, surmised to have run away from the field of Culloden. His second son, William, married my mother, Anna Hawkins. My father died in the year of my birth. I was sent to a respectable day school and afterwards, as boarder to a commercial academy. When I was thirteen years old it was settled that I must learn a trade. For seven long years I was kept at press and case, working eleven hours a day - and occasionally all night. I got half a crown for the night's work, but no other payment or present from year's end to year's end.

"My mother's only brother, John Isaac Hawkins, taught me to turn my thoughts westward. His was a name well known both in European and American scientific circles as an inventor of the most fertile resources. At his home I was in the habit of meeting the leading men of the Royal Society and the Society of Arts.

"In 1832, the first dread year of the Asiatic cholera, my brothers, Thomas and Isaac, and myself made up our minds to emigrate. After a near shipwreck and four months in the Atlantic crossing we landed at York, Upper Canada.

"'Muddy Little York' (now Toronto) contained in 1834 some 8500 inhabitants. To us the sole attraction was the Emigrant Office.

We purchased a 'U.E. Location Ticket' for a hundred dollars and forthwith booked ourselves for Lake Simcoe, and arrived at Barrie, then only a few log huts. Thence we travelled by tangled bush road to the Nottawasaga River, and on by bush path to our forest-covered lot.

"For nearly three years we continued to work contentedly at our bush farm, experiencing the various difficulties and joys of Canadian backwoods pioneers, as I have fully recorded.

"In the course of the years 1835, 6 and 7 I made many journeys to Toronto, sometimes wholly on foot, sometimes partly by steamboat and stage and met many estimable people, nearly all then admirers of Wm. L. Mackenzie's political course. I was a close witness of the 'Skirmish of Montgomery's Farm'. On April 12th, I witnessed, with great sorrow, the execution by hanging of Samuel Lount and Peter Matthews, two of the principal rebel leaders. However, I am surprised that those who condemn Sir F.B. Head for acting as his own Prime Minister can see nothing to find fault in Lord Sydenham doing the very same thing.

"Early in 1838 I obtained an engagement as manager of a newspaper, the 'Palladium'. From that time until the year 1860 I continued in the same profession, publishing successively the 'Herald', 'Patriot', 'News of the Week', 'Atlas' and Toronto 'Daily Colonist' newspapers, and lastly the Quebec 'Advertiser' and the 'Mirror of Parliament', forerunner of today's 'Parliamentary Hansard.

"Among the Loyalists with whom I was brought into personal contact were Alderman George T. Denison and Alderman Dixon of Toronto. Some of my Tory friends of Rebellion times include Edward G. O'Brien, John W. Gamble, Bishop Strachan (of 'Clergy Reserves' fame), Mr. H.C. Todd and his sons, Alfred (Clerk, House of Commons) and Alpheus (Librarian of the Dominion Parliament). Included among other close friends, co-workers, fellow journalists and politicians were Rev. Dr. John McCaul (Vice President of King's College), Mr. Wm. Edwards (of the Toronto Mechanics Institute), Mr. Wm. Rowsell and Mr. George A. Barber (founders of the St. George's Society of Toronto), Rev. Henry C. Cooper (Rector of St. George's, Islington) and the rectors and parishioners of St. James Cathedral. Among the most notable politically were P.M. Vankoughnet, O.R. Gowan, G.W. Allan, George Brown (rival 'Grit' and editor of the Toronto 'Globe') and John A. Macdonald, leader of the Conservative Party and later Prime Minister. Of these Vankoughnet, Gowan and Macdonald were all charter members of the British American League, which, at its Conference of 1849, advocated a union of all the provinces.

"During the years 1848 to 1853 I was a member of the Toronto City Council, with fellow Aldermen including G. Duggan, Geo. P. Ridout, G.W. Allan and Wm. A. Campbell - later also J.H. Cameron, Wm. Gooderham, Hon. Wm. Cayley and many others. In 1849, I wrote the address of Welcome to Lord Elgin, in 1850 I was a guest at the 'Buffalo Fete' and in 1851 a member of the delegation to the 'Boston Jubilee'. As Chairman of the Committee on Wharves, Harbours, etc., I was responsible for the original plans for the Toronto Esplanade.

"In 1853 I purchased the 'Toronto Daily Colonist', assuming the whole political responsibility, with assistant-editors John S. Hogan, Hugh C. Thomson and James Bain. All these years from 1853-1860 I was in confidential communication with the leaders of the Conservative Party, and the Upper Canadian members personally. In 1858 I sold the 'Colonist', competed for Legislative printing, and moved with the temporary capital to Quebec for the years 1859-60.

"Sir John A. Macdonald once said to myself:

'I don't care for office for the sake of money, but for the sake of power, and for the sake of carrying out my own views of what is best for the country.'

"On selling out my interest in the printing contract in Quebec, I became Managing Director of the Beaver Mutual Fire Insurance Company until it was legislated out of business by the Mackenzie government in 1876. The subsequent years have been spent in various business enterprises and public duties and in the writing of these 'Reminiscences'. In 1883 I became first Secretary (pro tem) of the Board of Management of the Toronto Public Library, and was shortly after appointed an Assistant-Librarian, being placed in charge of the Northern Branch.

"My family life has been both sad and rewarding, sad in the loss of my first wife, Elizabeth Cooper, and her young children but rewarding in the loyal companionship of my second wife, Mary Thomson, of Scarborough. To my beloved wife and to my young son, Frank Wilmington Thompson, I leave the little I now possess - my deep affection and the blessings of Providence.

"When we consider, in this year 1884, the future of Canada, we must take into account two factors particularly: first, the million French Canadians; and second, the Hudson's Bay Route, shorter from Britain by 1100 miles to Winnipeg, and by 2000 miles to China and Japan. The North-West has one of her natural markets in Great Britain, and Britain may find, in the future, one of her best customers in the North-Western prairies.

"Three times I have succeeded in gaining a position of reasonable wealth; and, as often, in 1857, 1860 and 1876 the 'great waterfloods' have swept over me, and left me to begin life anew. After having spent the greater part of half a century in various public capacities - and after having been the recipient of nearly every honorary distinction which it was in the power of my fellow citizens to confer - there remains for me no further object of ambition, except to die in harness - and ever singing:

'Night is falling dark and silent,  
Starry myriads gem the sky:  
Thus when earthly hopes have failed us,  
Brighter visions beam on high.'

- Samuel Thompson (1884)

#### Editor's Note:

This Profile History of Samuel Thompson has been prepared by Ronald T.F. Thompson, from his grandfather's autobiography.

## PART II

## THE HAWKINS' LETTERS (1794-- 1851)

John Isaac Hawkins (1766? - 1852?) "Man of Genius"

Dr. John Isaac Hawkins was a direct descendant of Sir John Hawkins, famous Elizabethan buccaneer, admiral and founder of the Royal Navy. His father, the Reverend Isaac Hawkins (1738-1820) was one of John Wesley's earliest converts, but became a Swedenborgian and a leader of his "New Church signified by the New Jerusalem of the Revelation". Both he and his brilliant but unbusinesslike son, John Isaac, mixed religion and business quite indiscriminately. The correspondence between the two was voluminous. Of the sixty-seven of their letters in the hands of the editor, the whole or parts of some twenty-three have been quoted. Most of the religious doctrinal matters and business details have been omitted. The selections used present quite an interesting picture of life and letters in both England and America from 1794 to 1851. There is, unfortunately, a gap of some twenty years, for which no letters are available.

To help bridge this gap, and to give a clearer picture of the life of John Isaac Hawkins, we are including extracts from the chapter "History of a Man of Genius" from Samuel Thompson's "Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer" (republished 1968 by McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto).

"John Isaac Hawkins was a name well known, both in European and American scientific circles, fifty years ago, as an inventor of the most fertile resource, and an expert in all matters relating to civil engineering. He must have left England for America somewhere about the year 1790, full of republican enthusiasm and of schemes of universal benevolence. Of his record in the United States I know very little, except that he married a wife in New Jersey, that he resided at Bordenton, that he acquired some property adjacent to Philadelphia, that he was intimate with the elder Adams, Jefferson, and many other eminent men. Returning with his wife to England, after twenty-five years' absence, he established a sugar refinery in Titchfield Street, Cavendish square, London, patronized his English relatives with much condescension, and won my childish heart by great lumps of rock-candy, and scientific experiments of a delightfully awful character. Also, he borrowed my

mother's money, to be expended for the good of mankind, and the elaboration of the teeming offspring of his inexhaustible inventive faculty. Morden's patent lead pencils, Bramah's patent locks, and, I think, Gillott's steel pens were among his numerous useful achievements, from some or all of which he enjoyed to the day of his death a small income, in the shape of a royalty on the profits. He assisted in the perfecting of Perkins's steam-gun, which the Duke of Wellington condemned as too barbarous for civilized warfare, but which its discoverer, Mr. Perkins, looked upon as the destined extirpator of all warfare, by the simple process of rendering resistance utterly impossible. This appalling and destructive weapon has culminated in these times in the famous mitrailleuses of Napoleon III, at Woerth and Sedan, which, however, certainly neither exterminated the Prussians nor added glory to the French empire.

"At his home I was in the habit of meeting the leading men of the Royal Society and the Society of Arts, of which he was a member, and of listening to their discussions about scientific novelties. The eccentric Duke of Norfolk, Earl Stanhope, the inventor of the Stanhope press, and other noble amateur scientists, availed themselves of his practical skill, and his name became known throughout Europe. In 1825 or thereabouts, he was selected by the Emperor Francis Joseph, of Austria, to design and superintend the first extensive works erected in Vienna for the promotion of the new manufacture of beet-root sugar, now an important national industry throughout Germany. He described the intercourse of the Austrian Imperial-Royal family with all who approached them, and even with the mendicants who were daily admitted to an audience with the Emperor at five o'clock in the morning, as of the most cordial and lovable character.

"From Vienna my uncle went to Paris, and performed the same duties there for the French Government, in the erection of extensive sugar works. The chief difficulty he encountered there, was in parrying the determination of the Parisian artisans not to lose their Sunday's labour. They could not, they said, support their families on six days' wages, and unless he paid them for remaining idle on the Sabbath day, they must and would work seven days in the week. I believe they gained their point, much to his distress and chagrin.

"His next exploit was in the construction of the Thames tunnel, in connection with which he acted as superintendent of the works under Sir Isambert Brunel. This occupied him nearly up to the time of my own departure for Canada, in 1833. The sequel of his story is a melancholy one. He made fortunes for other men who bought his inventions but himself sank into debt, and at last died in obscurity at Rahway, New Jersey, whither he had returned as a last resort, there to find his former friends dead, his beloved republic become a paradise for office-grabbers and sharpers, his life a mere tale of talents dissipated, and vague ambition unsatisfied.\*

---

"\*Since writing the above, I find in 'Scribner's Monthly' for November 1880, the following notice of my uncle, which forms a sad sequel to a long career of untiring enthusiasm in the service of his fellow-creatures. It is the closing paragraph of an article headed 'Bordentown and the Bonapartes,' from the pen of Joseph B. Gilder:

"It yet remains to say a few words of Dr. John Isaac Hawkins - civil engineer, inventor, poet, preacher, phrenologist and 'mentor-

general to mankind,' - who visited the village towards the close of the last century, married and lived there for many years; then disappeared, and, after a long absence, returned a gray old man, with a wife barely out of her teens. 'This isn't the wife you took away, doctor,' some one ventured to remark. 'No,' the blushing girl replied, 'and he's buried one between us.' The poor fellow had hard work to gain a livelihood. For a time, the ladies paid him to lecture to them in their parlours; but when he brought a bag of skulls, and the heart and windpipe of his (adopted) son preserved in spirits, they would have nothing more to do with him. As a last resort, he started the 'Journal of Human Nature and Human Progress,' his wife 'setting up' for the press her husband's contributions in prose and rhyme. But the 'Journal' died after a brief and inglorious career. Hawkins claimed to have made the first survey for a tunnel under the Thames, and he invented the 'ever-pointed pencil', the 'iridium-pointed gold pen', and a method of condensing coffee."

The Correspondence: Rev. John Hawkins, Son John Isaac

(from Rev. Isaac Hawkins)  
Sept. 7th, 1794

Mr. John Hawkins,  
Guildford, London.

Dear Child,

When I rec'd your letter and read of content I was much struck to think of not seeing you any more in time. It is of greatest tryal I think I have ever Expreanced in all my life. Had the Lord been pleased to have taken you to the world of spirits this would have been Easily born in comparison to this but sometimes I reason with myself it may be for his good and if Lord is the same in America as in England and I consider that my time will be short in this world and it will be of no consequence when I am in the world of spirits what part of this world my children dwell. Was it not for these and such like considerations it would be too hard for me. Your mother ever since she heard your letter has fretted so about you that she is very poorly and is feverish but we hope it will soon ware off. I sent last week the plan of the lathe and the Clock Engaine to be left till called for. I shall send tomorrow your mother's box with your shoes and the sash planes they may be of use to you if you can not get anything else to do and your gun I intend (sending) you next Saturday Evening or Sunday morning. Shall fill box full of nuts if I can get them. Give our love to your Brothers and Sisters.

Your Affectionate Father

(from Rev. Isaac Hawkins)  
Sept. 20th, 1794

Dear Child (John, in Philadelphia)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ, who I trust will always be with you to keep you in the way that you go that you turn not to the right Hand nor to the Left: The world is artfull and cunning lying in the wicked one, therefore we had

need to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life, if you are watchfull and shun evils of every kind as sins against God then shall light shine out of obscurity and the sun of Righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings.

With respect to your choice of a partner, I would advise you not to be too much in an hurry. Look well around you and find out the temper as much as possible look to the Lord for directions and be careful not to have one that is too extravagant. If there is not one of the New Church I think I should prefer a plain farmer's daughter to any person in a town as they are more simple, and if she has one or two hundred acres of good land so much the better.

When you come to Baltimore it will be best for you to inquire if the account given by Mr. Cooper in his book be a true account or not. If it is you will then be able to know where it will be best for you to settle and you must consider the climate with respect to health for I find many places is very unhealthy and as the winter is hard it will require you to take some flanning and line your wastecoat and breeches or wear flanning wastecoat under. I would advise you not to be too free with your money it will be necessary as you are going amongst strangers to be very saving for when money is gone it is not easily collected again and also to buy those things that are dureable. Be carefull of your living for being in a strange climate requires rigularity. I would advise you to drink Herb Tea as you do here and not to drink water alone put a little wine or spirits in it, and eat as little salt meat as possible. James' Powder will do almost for any disorder. The doctors perhaps do not understand the English constitution, therefore I should not employ any of the country doctors if you should be taken in any inflametory disorder the powders will do for you and if you find yourself unhealthy do not let it be long before you return to your native country again.

Now, my Dear Child I commend you to the protection of Lord Jesus Christ who is the one only God. My desire and prayer to Him is that you may be preserved blameless and kept in the way you go if the Lord goes up with you all will be well but if it is not of the Lord I hope something will prevent you from going. Let us hear from you as often as is possible with all particulars. When I was in town I could not enter into many things which I should have done but could not being obliged to refrain from speaking my affections was too strong that I was frequently obliged as it were to put you out of my thoughts or introduce things of more indifferent a nature. We wish you well and may the Lord bless you and may his face shine upon you and bless you and give you peace. I hope I have no need to caution you to be carefull of what company you keep, you are sufficiently well informed ..... Especially in the conjugal Love which is most valuable now I conclude with the blessings of the Lord on you and prosper that you may be able to say where ere you are, where ere you move you meet the object of your love, from your most Loving, Tender and Affectionate Father and Mother

John & Betty Hawkins

(from John Hawkins)  
Philadelphia, 17 Nov. 1794?

My beloved Wife (Anna),

Though we have been absent in body, we have not in soul. I have been with you all the day in imagination, and all the night in dreams. Oh! my love with what rapture do I look forward to the day when we shall see each other again.

.....  
.....

Your affectionate husband

(from John Hawkins)  
Philadelphia, 19 Dec. 1794

(to wife Anna)

Tomorrow I shall return to the arms of my beloved, - whilst I am writing this my heart beats with transport at the idea.....

Farewell my love. I have a thousand things to say to you, but have not time for more than that I am your

Affectionate husband

(from John Hawkins)  
Philadelphia, May 20, 1799

My dear love (wife Anna)

.....  
I need not tell my charmer how I long to return to her beloved caresses, with what pleasure can we take a retrospective view of our marriage life during the years which we have lived together, and with what delight can we look forward to the pleasing prospect which our mutual love presents.

Adieu

May we always look to him who created and redeemed us for vain is the help of Man.

I am your affectionate Husband

(from John Hawkins)  
Philadelphia 6 March 1799

Mrs. Anna Hawkins,  
Bordenton, N.J.

Never did the forsaken dove lament the loss of its mate, or the sailor from the top of the mast look out for land, with more earnestness than I long for the caresses of my beloved. I feel as it were but half a being. I hope however I shall soon see my love again, I expect on Sunday. --- I have not yet taken a house, but expect I shall agree with a gentleman to morrow for a house and 20 acres of land, near Newtown about 10 miles from Bailey's. -- I would have written yesterday by Tom Horbert, but did not know of his going time enough.

I have many things to say, but must defer them 'till I see you.  
Remember me affectionately to Brother, Sister & all friends.

I am your affectionate Husband

(from John Hawkins)

Philadelphia 30 June 1800

(to wife Anna)

Tuesday has passed and Thursday come and still I am separated from my beloved by the urgency of business, however I am now resolved on coming home on Saturday or Sunday.

.....  
.....

Oh! My love, I am sick for want of your endearing company, I am like a fish out of water, I have no pleasure, no society, no comfort without you. I lose my rest every night through my anxiety to return to the caresses of my Charming Wife, but I must endure it for 2 or 3 days longer, when we will clasp each other to our Bosoms, and taste delights which none but such as Love like us can form any Idea of.

.....  
.....

Farewell My Love  
Your Affectionate Husband

London, November 27th, 1805

Dear Father & Mother,

I received yours of the "blank" day of this month, acknowledging the receipt of my long letter, and approving my conduct in settling with Joseph, next to the approbation of God, & my own conscience, yours is to me the most consoling.

.....  
.....

Your dutiful children  
John & A. Hawkins

London, December 30th 1805

Hon! Father & Mother,

.....  
.....

I have nine cases and other parts of instruments (upright pianos and clavioles) ready for the finisher, but as I do not chose to let any instruments go out but such as are well finished, I must be content to creep in at this rate until I can get some more hands instructed in that branch.

Inclosed is a pattern of the carriages, your others were too long, and many of the tenons too thin, for the ladder piece ..... I shall want about 200 a week now, and more after a little while.

Much good may be done by your preaching and reading. It will be well not to advance anything but the most essential parts of the new doctrines ("The New Church"), at first, lest people should become alarmed, and not come.....

We are all well, and wish to be remembered to all our friends of the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem.

We remain your dutiful children

John & A. Hawkins

London Oct. 26, 1806

Honourable Father &amp; Mother,

With regards to myself I should have sent you some money but I had it not to send - some Nobility & Gentry that owe me money are out of town and probably will not be in town till parliament meets. This is one cause of my shortage of cash - another is I have received a few hundred feet of holly in the log from America ..... which I have not yet been able to sell without loss..... I have three pianos of the upright kind ordered for which I should be glad you would make top and bottom bars. ....

..... I have finished the Claviolle\* and received the most unbound applause of many of the best judges, it astonishes and pleases all who hear it. ....

My prospects in the Claviolle, as well as in the upright piano are very promising, my pianos are now in some of the first families, and I expect much recommendation from them.....

Your dutiful children  
John I. & A. Hawkins

London, Jan. 17, 1807

Dear Father &amp; Mother,

I have paid this day to Loyd Jones & Co. five Pounds for you, am very sorry I could not make it ten as you requested, but I have so much difficulty to get my money in, that I scarcely know what to do. I have been after money today which I ought to have had in July last, but cannot get it yet. These great folks do not trouble themselves about paying, so long as they can get the goods out of peoples hands, but my losses have been too heavy for me to serve them on such terms. It is therefore my intention for the future, to make my bargain when I take the order, for the cash to be paid on delivery, on which condition I will sell at a moderate profit.

People are quite astonished at the powers of the Claviolle, and say it is superior to every other musical instrument whatever. I have nearly finished a second one which is already sold, I expect soon to be able to send you patterns of the carriages for the Claviolle, and also for some of the other parts as you can conveniently make up in the country. I am sorry I cannot immediately do it, because I wish to see this Claviolle finished first, in order that I may make proper patterns of every part so that no alteration may afterwards be necessary. I do not expect there will be any alteration from this second one, but as it wants but a few days of being finished it will be best to give every part a fair trial as to strength and cost before anything is made towards the next. The price of the Claviolle is 120 Guineas, and most likely I shall rise the price to 130 Guineas. I am not afraid of commanding it when the instrument becomes known.

.....  
.....  
Indeed I shall confine myself to Pianos of that construction, and the Claviolle, for there is not sufficient profit on the square pianos to make it worth my attention.....

.....As I can get a good deal of business in the upright Piano

## \*Editor's Note:

The claviolle is a viol-like instrument played from a keyboard by means of a rotary bow.

and the Clavirole, which afford a better profit, I think it is my business to push them.

.....

Your dutiful children,  
John & A. Hawkins

May 23rd 1807

Dear Child (John, aged about 40 yrs.)

You may conceive it was not pleasant for us to see your name in a newspaper. I hope now you will know by dear bought experience the value of money which you have not yet had the knowledge of. We are very sorry the cause of God is so much blamed on your account.

Before I can make out my account you must send me an account of pianos that is sold and to be sold - and Claviroles - and send me word how I am to act about the right I have in the patent.....

.....

.....

Joseph tells me he is in hopes his business will answer his expectations; he has taken from Ladyday to Ladyday 1088 Pounds beside book debts. We hope you will get into a better way of living in future than you have in times past whereby you may be able to owe no man anything which is our indispenceable duty to do. It is contrary to duty to begin high and come low afterward; the wise way is to begin low and advance by degrees.

From your sorrowful Father & Mother

Isaac & B. Hawkins

London May 27th, 1807

Honourable Father & Mother

.....

On Monday I received your letter of the 23rd which wounds my feelings excessively. I am conscious I do not deserve your reproaches, I receive no blame from any of my creditors except my relations, and except also a butcher to whom I am indebted who has no more feeling than his bull dog.

I acknowledge with the sincerest humility that I have abundantly sinned in the sight of God, but I am proud to say I know of no evil I have committed in the sight of men. ....

..... I am to be sure a Bankrupt, but I am not the less an honest man for that ..... I am not only not blamed by my creditors, but I have received the greatest applause from several of them for my economy and industry. ....

..... I have not been guilty of any extravagance ..... I have always had my systematic views, but the misfortune is they have had too much benevolence in them. .... I now however see that this principle will not do in the present depraved state of the world.

..... It was from the same benevolent principle that I gave at Joseph's importunity, that most unwise engagement, which put it in his power to strip me without me being able to help myself. .... It was my original intention to make only one instrument of a sort until I had the public opinion on them, but that wretched engagement obliging me to find employment for so many men compelled me to go on faster than prudence dictated. A number of instruments (upright pianos) were

made which did not sell, not for any fault of their construction but merely because their outside appearance did not happen to be in the fashionable style.....

I really do not know what you mean by my beginning high .... Few journeymen's families live on so little money as we do, you know our table has always been supplied with the plainest and cheapest food, and our drink almost all drawn from the river. .... Is it in dress? Certainly not, for it has been our study to keep as much below the mark as decency would permit. .... We have kept but one servant, have visited no balls, plays or assemblies or anything of the kind, in short frugality has been our regular practice.

I cannot agree with you that "to owe no man anything is our indispensable duty". It certainly is our duty not to contract a debt without a prospect of paying it, but credit is universally allowed to be the soul of business. Destroy credit and you ruin all classes of people.

.....  
.....

Your dutiful son,  
John Hawkins

(from John Hawkins)  
London, Sept.5, 1808

My Love, (wife Anna)

.....  
.....

Father and I have been treating ourselves today by attending public worship in the Floating Chapel, called the British Ark; it lies moored in the Thames a little below the London Docks. It is an old Bomb brig, fitted up as a Chapel, with a gallery all around, and capable of seating comfortably about 600 persons with standing room for nearly two hundred more. The Reverend Mr. Smith of Penzance preached a very useful and an appropriate sermon from the 7th verse of the second chapter of Jonah, "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord."

The British Ark is fitted up as a Chapel with a view to induce seamen from the numerous vessels in the River, to attend the worship of the Lord. The pulpit of this Chapel is open to Christian Ministers of every denomination, on condition that they preach the fundamental doctrines of Christianity without bringing forward, the peculiar points in which they differ from other Christians. Our worthy friend Dr. Waugh is one of the Committee which managed the concern.

.....  
.....

I wish it was consistent with prudence for me to join you for a week in Southton but circumstances forbid it. I am now prepared for a stroke of work, which I believe will yield a profit of Twenty Pounds a week. I have bought between three and four hundred pounds worth of sugar, part of which will be in tomorrow. I must melt it all down, that it may be in progress toward refinement. Now if I was to go from home without leaving you to manage in my absence, there must be a total standstill of the whole work, and wages going on all the time. This would be a greater sacrifice than either you or Brother or Sister or any of their children would wish to be made for

the gratification of a visit, especially when it is considered that it is necessary for me to strain every nerve to fetch up some of the enormous losses which I have sustained by supplying several unprincipled sugar refiners, with the means of making fortunes.

.....  
.....

Your affectionate husband

London, Nov. 5, 1808

Dear Father & Mother,

Your two letters of Oct. 30 & Nov. 1 came to hand in due time, and I have prepared a plate, jar and tin foil, for you to make an Electrical Machine, being afraid it is the only chance of restoring to Mother the use of her limbs. I hoped to send it by the Coach yesterday, but had some difficulty in getting the plate, and knowing it would be very troublesome for you to drill the hole, unless you should have everything convenient, I thought it best to do it myself. You will have only a wooden axle to make, and it will soon be mounted. You may put four cushions, one on each side at top and bottom, and have four arms to the Conductor. I think the most effectual way to use electricity is to draw sparks or rather a stream of the fluid, by a blunt wooden point, and this gives no pain. You can make an insulated stool to put a chair upon with four block quart bottles.

I have been very uneasy at not sending to you as I appointed to do in June last, but I waited to get the extinguishers which I expected almost daily and it is only within these three days that any have been completed to my satisfaction, they kept me waiting several days for the pieces which were stamped out at Birmingham, and then some alterations were necessary to make them act well. I have sent you six, to see if you can sell them. I sell them at a shilling sixpence but shall charge you a shilling. Have sent three copies of music and three pens to try the market with. If you can sell any of them I will send you more. The music sells at two shillings sixpence a number, the silver pen at five shillings and the brass at two shillings sixpence. I have sent also two pounds of coffee, the duty being taken off it is as cheap as Tea, and we think it will be more comfortable for mother than anything else.

.....  
.....

Have sent you some Reports of the New Church, and got you the minutes of Conference, but it is somehow mislaid.

.....

Joseph has not sent the Ten Pounds yet, I hope to be able in a few days to pay you the balance. I have had very heavy expenses, but hope the Museum to turn into something handsome now, as I have the Claviolo and many other things added last season. I opened on Tuesday last, but have given no public notice of it 'till today, with so many things in hand as you will see in my catalogue I have scarcely time to take proper rest. ....

.....

While Mother continues to be so afflicted, send me every particular of her case, and I will consult some of the first Physicians in London, which I can do without expence. There are a great many of them members of the Society of Arts, of which I am also a member.

I told you in my hasty letter of yesterday that Mr. Thompson kept

his bed, and he has no hopes of getting about again. It is a nervous disorder and decay of Nature. His Doctor keeps stuffing him with medicine, but I think rest of body and mind is the principal thing wanted. He has been much distress for money on account of building the houses.

A gentleman is waiting for me in the Museum, and I must close, hoping better help soon to both.

Your dutiful children,  
John and Anna Hawkins

Sept. 19, 1811

Dear Father & Mother,

The cares and anxieties of worldly affairs have for a long time past prevented my enjoying the high satisfaction of communicating with you by the only means that distance permits, and even now I am compelled to be short, as several circumstances demand my immediate attention. You must not thus suppose that I am getting "all the world in a string". No, on the contrary, I am immersed in difficulties up to the chin and all my exertions are necessary to keep my head above water. I have for many years fondly cherished the hope of getting so much beforehand in the world as to be able to spend a considerable proportion of my time in propagating the heavenly doctrines of the New Dispensation (New Church). This is the height of my ambition, and I respect earthly considerations only as a means to this great end. It has however pleased the Lord in his divine providence to thwart my endeavours, and although I cannot as yet see the advantage of my being kept from performing those uses I so anxiously desire, I am bound to acknowledge that it is for the best, and constrained to say "The Lord's will be done."

The Tunnel was a most ruinous concern for me. I did not get money enough for my twelve months labor to pay my extra expenses at Rotherhithe. The company is so poor and so deeply in debt that I have no chance of ever getting anymore, and there is no hope of raising a new subscription until a peace takes place and who will say that there is any likelihood of peace for these dozen years to come.

During my labors on the Tunnel my wife managed the filter business (and kept the house) or I could not have supported the expenses at Rotherhithe. The Shooter's Hill Road was also given up for want of money, and indeed, of about 100 different plans for roads, canals, docks, tunnels etc. which were prepared for Parliament the session before last, about 80 of them were given up for want of money, owing to the stagnation of trade.

I have now brought forward a new article which promises to be very profitable. The Essence of Coffee, of which I herewith send you a pint. It is so convenient and so much better than that made in the usual way that our customers are recommending it to their friends very fast. Mr. Dunn is a worthy member of the New Church, and we two can make a very large quantity of the Essence of Coffee with our own hands so that we do not employ any assistants who will be let into the secret. We therefore hope to keep it to ourselves for some time to come, more particularly as the plan of making it is unknown to the Chemists. We made it at first less than half the strength that we do now, and at half the price we began in February and it went well until June .....

..... when it was found that the warm weather had turned some of it sour .....

..... This was a severe stroke .... but we found that by making it much stronger it would keep. We shall have it next week still stronger..... The pint will then contain the essence of two full pounds of coffee and will be found as cheap as good coffee can be made in the common way, and much less trouble.

.....  
.....

Inclosed is a plan of the washing machine to a scale.

The late failures of so many Country Banks is a crying evil. Government should compel every bank to give landed security for the amount of all their notes in circulation. This would be a remedy.

In a national point of view it is shocking to consider the distress occasioned by the failure of a Country Bank. But in contemplating the subject spiritually it wears a very different aspect. Perhaps those who are now lamenting may hereafter rejoice, the loss of their money may be the saving of their souls.....

.....  
The enjoyment of the good things of this world is by no means necessary to our spiritual nourishment. If we really believe aright in the Divine providence we should not have the least anxiety about our worldly condition, our only care would be to live within our incomes whether they be a shilling a day or a hundred thousand a year. We should be equally contented in a cottage or a palace. The thought of dying in a workhouse would give us no uneasiness, although we should strenuously use every orderly means to avoid such an extremity.

.....  
.....

Sister Thompson informs me that they were obliged to discharge M. Hawkins, as he could not bear to be instructed by William into those modes of working which long experience has proven to be the best, particularly as to the hollow handles.

That the Lord in his divine Providence may shower down his blessings on your Head is the sincere prayer of your truly affectionate and dutiful children.

John & Anna Hawkins

(from Rev. Isaac Hawkins)  
Hull, (1805)

Dear John,

.....  
Your wife has been so fully employed that some nights one hour's sleep has been all that she could get so that it is impossible that she can come to Oxford.

(from John Hawkins)  
Hull, Jan. 7, 1816

My dear Love (wife Anna)

.....  
.....

I have spoken to Mr. M----- about Joe, and recommend him to employ him, which Mr. M----- has agreed to provided he will live in the house

with the rest of the men, and work at any part of the labour he may be set about. He will give him the same as they always give to new beginners, which is 9 shillings a week board wages paid every Saturday night, and 16 pounds a year paid quarterly every month after quarter day. He must expect to work hard and to get up very early in the morning, but if he behaves well and makes himself more artful than the common men, I have no doubt but his wages would soon be raised.

.....  
 May the Lord of his infinite mercy bless my love, and lift up upon her the light of his countenance. I am afraid we shall be separated nearly a month longer yet - I will not undertake another job that shall require another such a separation.

Your own

(from John Hawkins)

Hull, January 17, 1817

My dear love (wife Anna)

I read your dear letter of the 15th and am sorry you are in such trouble. If you find -----, get the remainder of the money which he has not spent, but don't take him to a Magistrate, for then we could not possibly prevent his being transported. They are now very severe with clerks who are guilty of a breach of trust. One of ----- Company's clerks has been lately detected in defrauding them, but they have not prosecuted him on condition that he leave the country immediately.

.....  
 ..... Adieu my love,

(from John Hawkins)

London, Sept. 4, 1818

My Love (wife Anna)

.....  
 .....  
 We have had a great piece of work since you have been gone, and several very grave and very learned consultations have been held at various times on the subject of poor Puss's malady. Surgeon William declared his opinion to be that her ladyship was not in a family way, and that he knew exactly what was her disorder, he wished very much to be allowed to exhibit his skill in surgery, by performing an operation that should extract, at once, the injurious substance, which, if permitted to remain, would go on increasing, until the death of the patient would be rendered inevitable. Dr. Martineau, on the other hand, held, that there were no such preternatural appearances, as would warrant the idea, that anything but a regular maturation of offspring was in progress, but Nurse Mary insisted that the period of nature had long gone by, her mother however reminded her, that the antiquated spinster, who had the honor of bringing up the fair grimal-kin (old she cat), asserted that contrary to the usual custom, always took fourteen weeks as her time of gestation instead of nine, the general rate of her species. This assertion Dr. Martineau treated with a degree of ridicule bordering upon contempt, he advised that more time should be given, since there might have been an error in the supposed time of commencement, which advice I acquiesced in, and put an end to the council.

This morning, about 10 o'clock, the mighty difficulty was solved, Dr. Martineau's judgement proved sound, whilst that of Mr. Surgeon William met with a complete overthrow. About half past nine Nurse Mary was much alarmed by the appearances of labour, and sent her servant Polly, to fetch the elder Mrs. Middleborough, to be the midwife for the occasion, but before her arrival two young newcomers made their appearance, and shortly after, the nurse issued her verbal bulletin, that three more had arrived, then two more, afterwards two more, making nine, and during some time this appeared to be the whole amount, but nature, invigorated by rest, expelled another, and the total number was declared to be ten. The midwife said that was a small number compared to what she had seen in the course of her practice.

The work of destruction soon commenced and in a short time the lungs of six of them, which had just been inflated with air, were distended with water, and consequently the vital functions ceased to be performed, almost as soon as they were begun. On seeking for more victims it was found that only two remained, and therefore that there could have been but eight in the whole, this number however was quite as great as could be expected, from the report of ten, when we recollect Mary's magnifying powers.

The two kept, are, of course, the greatest beauties, just like the mother, and they are all three likely to do well.

.....  
 .....

Your affectionate husband

(from John)

(to wife Anna)

I find in Harriet all that charming animation which you led me to expect, joined with a fund of intelligence, which would render her an ornament to a palace, or enable her to convert a cottage into paradise.

Your own

Extract from letter (Feb. 19, 1834) from Thomas Thompson (farmer, Sunnidale, Ont.) to William (Pianoforte Manufacturer) at Lexington, Kentucky, re John Hawkins:

"Uncle (John Isaac Hawkins) is now deeply engaged in a Scheme for working carriages on a Rail Road by means of Mr. Saxton's Patent Pulley which by a single Horse walking two miles and a half an hour is to draw the Carriage thirty miles an hour. Henry says that he has procured subscriptions to enable him to commence on a piece of ground a quarter of a mile in length. If he succeeds it is intended to apply to Parliament. Henry says that he is not much inclined to think it will answer as the speed is occasioned by multiplying Pulleys and will require more Power than he is aware of. He adds, however, it will circulate a little spare cash of which I shall get a little for Timber. He pays ready money and does not intend to go beyond his subscriptions."

(from John Hawkins)  
 Bordentown, N.J.  
 1st November, 1850

Mr. Samuel Thompson,  
 Toronto, Upper Canada.

My dear Nephew,

.....  
 We have scarcely yet arranged our goods in convenient situations in the house; but the Landlady of our late house has made a seizure for the rent due to her for the Quarter ending Oct. 1st, which must shortly be paid, or perhaps a Hundred Pounds worth of goods may be sold to raise the Twenty Pounds, together with the expenses of seizure and sale.

If you and your Brothers could conveniently lend us the amount, I feel confident I shall be able to repay it in a few months from the profits of manufactures I am preparing to put forward.

My dear Wife feels the affliction most acutely and her nerves are severely shaken, this being the first trouble of the kind she has ever experienced.

Your affectionate Uncle

(from John Hawkins)  
 Bordentown, N.J.,  
 20 Dec. 1850

Mr. S. Thompson,  
 Toronto, Upper Canada.

Dear Nephew,

By dint of working early and late, ever since my last letter, I have fitted up an apparatus, on a very small scale, for making the Essence of Coffee, and have made some excellent samples, combined with Sugar and Cream, so that 2 or 3 teaspoonfuls of the Compound makes a cup of excellent Coffee, completely sweetened & creamed, without any other addition than boiling water, or if boiling water is not to be had, a delightful beverage is made with the addition of cold water.

This compound will, no doubt, keep good for many months, if not years, in all climates.

We are now in great need of Cash to buy Coffee, Sugar and Cream, and should feel much obliged if you could conveniently send the Fifteen Pounds, or part of it, which you stated that you held for our use.

We shall pay our last ten cents for the postage of this letter to Lewiston, and have already incurred a debt of near Three Pounds at a small store, for Coffee, Sugar and Cream, to prove the working of the apparatus, and shall anxiously look forward to the day when your kindness shall replenish our empty purse.

As soon as a fair opportunity offers I will send you a sample, in order that you may judge of its value. There are several waiting here for a supply.

Would it be convenient for you to print a few labels to paste on the bottles, in case of their being to be sent here at a small cost.

Please present our loves, and thanks, for all favors, to your sisters and brothers, and accept the same yourself.

In great haste

Yours affectionately

(from John Hawkins)

New Street, Lower Rakway,  
New Jersey, United States,  
8th September, 1851.

Samuel Thompson, Esq.

Dear Nephew,

.....  
I had begun to recover strength after my heavy lifts in removing from Bordentown to Milton ..... and to Rakway: but seeing a strong man nearly overpowered by a heavy box he was putting upon a high box, I rushed to his assistance and so strained my back again that I was obliged to lie down half my time for 2 or 3 weeks; after which I gradually gained strength till 3 weeks ago, when I suffered a severe attack of English Cholera-Morbus .....  
..... I have been obliged to lie down again half my time ..... so that my Electro-Metallurgy is not yet in operation.....

Soon after I commenced selling the Essence of Coffee I was informed that an article was in the market, sold as Essence of Coffee, in paper packets of about 3 ounces, at 12½ cents, impudently stated to save four pounds of Coffee. I bought a packet and found it to consist of dried bitter herbs and drugs; one of them appeared to be Gamage, a principal ingredient in Morrison's Pills, and a strong poison. Also another Packet, about 4 ounces, sold at the same price under the name Extract of Coffee, still more impudently said to save ten pounds of Coffee.

These two gross impositions, neither of which contained a particle of Coffee, opposed me in the Market, and were cried up as being cheap in comparison with mine.

Finding I could not make way with pure Coffee, against this abominable trash ..... I have discontinued the Manufacture after sinking \$100 in apparatus etc., and now look to Medallions and Silvering fluid, as soon as I am sufficiently recovered to proceed with the work.

My dear Wife's indefatigable attentions, and skilful and prompt administrations of Homeopathic Mediums suitable to my case, the uses of which medicines she had carefully before studied, contributed to counteract the malignity of the disease (Cholera) which, under allopathic treatment (use of drugs producing an opposite reaction) most likely would have terminated fatally. ....

.....  
People imagine that I am an old fool for marrying a young Wife, but as it is universally considered that a wife is the best of all Nurses that a man can have, I hold the notion that I showed great wisdom in choosing a young one, as being more able to endure the fatigues of nursing than an old Wife could.

This consideration, however, had no share in making up the Match; the union was founded on a clear perception by both parties that the points of agreements in our views and feelings were so numerous and so strong that they would unite the minds and form a bond which would scatter to the winds any little disagreements that might arise out of untoward intercourse with a troublesome world. The natural bodily union was therefore the consequence of a spiritual union of minds formed by the Divine Providence, and, looking to Eternity, has no respect to difference of ages, such differences belonging to this world only.

If I am successful in the sale of my productions (medallions etc.) and realize the handsome profits which may reasonably be expected ... and if our friend Mr. Dunn, in London, succeeds in collecting from Mr. Mordon money due in the form of royalty on Pens and Clips, I shall endeavour to buy a small house.....

My beloved Wife Emma unites with me in the affectionate regards to your Sisters, Brothers and yourself, and we commend you to the holy keeping of our Heavenly Father.

I am, My dear Nephew,

Your affectionate Uncle,  
John Isaac Hawkins

#### Editor's Note:

This is the last letter received from John Isaac Hawkins, and indications are that the old man died about 1852 (aged about ninety years). His young wife (still in her twenties?) was last heard of as seamstress and housekeeper.

#### The Three Letters

Extracts from Letter (1834) from Edward Hawkins (Lebeth, England) to his brother William "John Isaac" Hawkins, Kentucky. This letter provides a rather remarkable description of the immigrants in London in those few years prior to the Great Migration:

London, February 2nd, 1834

Dear William,

It is very glad to hear that you are still in the world, and that you are well, and all begin to fear you were a ghost.

of this world. It is my intention of coming to America next Spring, 1835..... I am at present making Coal Shovels on my own acct., but there is not sufficient trade to support me and my family since the Coal Measures were..... Everything is very bad in this country, that it would be useless to attempt anything here; it is with me, that I wish to leave England and

## PART III

## EMIGRATION - LONDON TO UPPER CANADA, (1834 - 35)

## Reasons for Leaving England

As Samuel Thompson wrote "The year 1832, the first dread year of Asiatic Cholera contributed by its terrors to the exodus of alarmed fugitives from the crowded cities of the old country."

However, in the same paragraph the author of "Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer" makes it clear that the hope of "plenty of money" was the major driving force. Also, his brother Edward writes of his desire to leave England because of declining opportunities in his industry (shovels and measures) and a similar hope of doing better in America. Edward does not mention the cholera or the crowded cities; to the contrary he recounts with great pride and unusual detail of the recent improvements in London.

It is interesting that Edward's brothers (Thomas, Isaac and Samuel) who had by 1835 spent almost two seasons on a pioneer backwoods farm, were still very optimistic about their new life. However, it was not long before all three sought greener pastures than those to be found among the stumps north of Barrie, Ontario.

## The Three Letters

Extracts from letter (1834) from Edward Thompson (Lambeth, England) to his brother William "Piano Forte Maker", Lexington, Kentucky. This letter provides a rather remarkable description of the improvements in London in those few years prior to the Great Migration:

Lambeth, February 3rd, 1834

Dear Brother,

I am very glad to hear that you are alive & well, as from your long silence, we all began to fear you were no longer an inhabitant

of this world. It is my intention of coming to America next Spring, 1835..... I am at present making Coal Shovels on my own acct., but there is not sufficient trade to support me and my family since the Coal Measures were done away. ....Everything is very bad in this country, that it would be useless to attempt anything here; it is with the hope of bettering our circumstances, that we intend leaving England.

.....

Within this few years there has been strange alterations in and about London, especially where Fleet Market used to be; it is now a handsom wide Street with very broad pavement. There is a talk of making a Road in a direct line all the way to Islington, which will clear out the rookery's (or Old Houses) about Saffron Hill and its environs, which is very much wanted. St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street has been pulled down, and that part of the Street widened, and a New Church built in its stead, and a very light and handsome one it is, being quite an ornament to the Street. Several of the Churches in London have been made to show the time at all hours of the night, by having the Dial plate made of Glass, and a light placed behind it; it is very convenient and has a very novel effect. Wonderful alterations for the better have also taken place in the Strand. All the old houses on the right hand side going from Waterloo Bridge to Charing Cross have been pulled down, and very large houses and shops built in their stead all up to Pall Mall and it is now as handsome a street as any in London, and about double the width it used to be. St. Martin's Church has also been cleared of all the houses that surrounded it, with large handsome streets with several Public Buildings nearly all except the front, which shews to fine advantage, being reckoned the Noblest Church in London. I daresay you recollect what a nasty dirty place Old Hungerford Market used to be; it is now one of the Best and finest Markets I should suppose in the world, everything looks so nice and Clean it is quite a Parade, and reaches from the River Thames nearly up to the Strand. There are two Side entrances besides the Main one which is in the Strand. It is for the sale of Fish, Meat, Poultry, Fruit and Vegetables. The Fish part is close to the River, it is built of Brick and faced and paved with large stones, and has a great number of large handsome Pillows. The Principal entrance faces St. Martin's Church. Covent Garden Market has also been pulled down and rebuilt, but is nothing near so handsome as Hungerford Market. In the neighbourhood of Pentonville and Battle Bridge there has also been and are still making great improvements, the Regents Canal has been very long finished, and there are numerous Coal and other Wharfs and Warehouses, all along its banks to Paddington, and in the other direction untill it enters the Thames at Limehouse.

Steam carriages seem very likely to come into general use; there is or was one running from the Strand side of Waterloo Bridge, to Greenwich every day, on Sir Charles Dance's plans. It seems they can surmount the highest hills with the most perfect ease and safety, and are so very easily managed, that they can stop and turn in an instant, and can descend the hills as easily. The public turnpikes have almost all been done away with about or near London, and rate made on the Householders to repair the roads.

We have also two Zoological Gardens, one in Regents Park and the other on the Surrey side of the Water, laid out in very great taste and grand style. You pay one shilling entrance on a weekday, they are not open to the Public on Sundays except to subscribers. I have been to

both and was very much gratified - indeed I think I should never be tired of going; they have an amazing quantity of different kinds of Birds, Beasts, and reptiles from all country's yet known. We have also a new palace being finished for our King, William the 4th, on the left hand side of Buckingham Gate, as you enter the Park from Pimlico, which is built something in the form of Almshouses, or three parts of a square, and has a dome which looks at a distance something like the top of a balloon just rising above the houses - which does not add to its appearance but looks very ugly.

Carlton House has been torn down, and a very noble row of large houses built in its stead, with a very fine terrace in front which faces the park and there is a flight of steps up to it from the Park with a tall stone pillow in front of them, something like the monument which was built in memory of the Death of the Duke of York, but as he died greatly in debt, it is now called the I.O.U. Pillow.

We have a New Post Office very lately finished, it is a very fine building and is situated on the Right hand side of St. Martins Le Grand, where the Principal entrance is, the back entrance is in Foster Lane. We have also a new London Bridge, which is about double the width of the old one and is perfectly level; it has but five arches which has entirely done away with the Dangerous falls there, it's very light and neat and is a very beautiful structure. The houses on each side of the Bridge have been levelled with the ground, both sides of the River, and new and very large houses and Shops built; they look more like Noblemen's houses than tradesmen's. The Fishmongers Company have built a New Hall on the Thames Street side of the Bridge, which is ornamented from top to bottom, a new Dock for Shipping has been made between the London Docks and London Bridge with very spacious Vaults and Warehouses, and bids fare to rival the Old ones - it is called the St. Katharines Docks and is very commodious.

The Tower of London has been railed all round the land side, and the Ground planted with shrubs, by orders of the Duke of Wellington, who is the Governor of it. Cold Bath fields and Spa fields have both been built all over and is quite a town and several fine Squares made there.

The Cholera Morbus, as it is called, paid this country a visit, but it has been nothing near so fatal as in other Country's and we are now quite free from it. Almost all the Parish of Lambeth is now built over and is very populous.

Having given you as good an account of the improvements of and near London as I can recollect, and trusting you will send me as much information for my guidance as you can, when I come to America, I conclude by wishing you every happiness which you yourself can desire, and remain,

Your Affectionate Brother,  
Edward Thompson

Extracts from letter (1834) of Thomas J. Thompson (brother of Samuel Thompson, with whom he was pioneering a backwoods farm) to brother William, a Piano-Forte maker in Lexington, Kentucky:

Sunnidale (Upper Canada)  
February 19, 1834

.....  
We have been so fully occupied with one thing or another that we have not done much more to our clearing. We have about eight acres chopped. The snow has remained on the ground since the middle of November. It has not exceeded 3 feet at the deepest parts in the open clearing - in the Bush much less. It does not exceed a foot anywhere at present. We have not felt the cold much more than in England. The weather this month has been very fine and we are getting ready to make Maple Sugar. We have made Eighty Troughs which we suppose will be sufficient for what we want.

Extracts from letter (1835) of Samuel Thompson, pioneering North of Barrie, to brother William, in Kentucky.

Sunnidale, Upper Canada  
July 24, 1835

Dear William,

.....  
Thomas probably told you of our purchasing land in Saint Vincent township and intending to make that our permanent residence. If improvements here were made with the spirit they are in some parts of the province or in the States we should have had as we expected roads and stores sufficiently near to have justified us in proceeding there before now and leaving this altogether, but the cholera seems to have paralysed the energies both of the Government and individuals, and as yet no stores or houses have been built on the townplot at the head of Sunnidale road on Lake Huron, the mouth of the Notawasaga River on the map. We have consequently decided on staying here somewhat longer than we either expected or wished. I should be inclined to establish a store at the new town myself had I the means, but it would require at least 200 Pounds, which I am not very likely to get.

Matters however are not altogether at a stand-still. A road is cut all but bridging the creeks, which is in progress, round the Georgian Bay to the Big Head River, past our lot, where is an intended town plot. A saw-mill is building 9 miles from us on the Notawasaga River, 2 or 3 miles from the intended town, with free water communication to the Lake, and the Engineer has the contract for a grist mill at the same place. In addition, Capt. Bonnycastle, R.N., has come out to survey the Notawasaga River with the intention of clearing the drift timber locking the rapids and cutting a canal from the junction of that river with the Sunnidale Road, six miles from our land, into Lake Simcoe at Barrie, our present nearest market. A road is commenced also from the opposite side of Lake Simcoe to the Balsam Lake, 15 miles, preparatory to a canal connecting Lake Simcoe by means of the Talbot River to the Balsam Lake and thence by another canal now in operation from the Balsam Lake to Lake Ontario opening into the Bay of Quinte. Thus we shall have a complete inland line of steam navigation from the lower end of Lake Ontario to Lake Huron and the upper Lakes, which will

probably take all the produce of the Michigan territory at no distant date down to Montreal.

As for our own improvements, we have but little done, having been considerably engaged in Government work on the roads etc., without which we should have fared badly in money matters. We purchased a span of horses last winter with a good sleigh and harness, but were unfortunate enough to have one of our horses killed by the sleigh running down hill while the horses were standing at the bottom. Last year which was extremely dry we had but poor crops, the soil being sandy, but this season there is every appearance of our crops being among the best. We have here  $2\frac{3}{4}$  acres of wheat, 1 of peas, 1 of potatoes, 2 of oats,  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre of turnips,  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre of Indian Corn, remarkably good and perhaps an acre or more of grass now fit for hay, and vegetables of every kind. In St. Vincent we have two acres cleared and some oats and potatoes, making altogether 11 acres of crops. Thomas and Isaac are now employed in logging and cropping land which was chopped for Government in the next township, Notawasaga..... Everything here must be paid for in cash ..... You will see therefore that we must still struggle on till we have sufficient crops and a regular market to dispose of them, which must depend entirely on the course of events and the will of Providence.

Your affectionate Brother,  
Samuel Thompson

Selected extracts from the diary of Isaac Thompson, a pioneer farmer, most vividly and cogently the almost hopeless situation the family had to try to overcome. This story of the Isaac Thompson family at St. Vincent is only one example of the struggle that had to be faced by countless thousands of pioneer farmers who found themselves on inferior land. Their problems became particularly acute when, like Isaac, they were located far from the market and also isolated socially.

Extracts from letter (1837) of Samuel Thompson, pioneer at "Notawasaga" (north of Harris, Ont.) to brother William Thompson.

Editor's Note: Part of this letter is written vertically as well as horizontally.

Nottawasaga, July 10, 1837

Dear William,

## PART IV

The letter now received (from Samuel) informs us that (sisters) Sophia and Anna have at last decided on joining us.

## A PIONEER FARMER

As to our own property I have to inform you that we have the deed of 200 acres of land in the township of St. Vincent, within 1 1/2 miles of Lake Huron (administered by the government) in a very fertile country, so say the Yankees and all who have seen it. We intend ultimately to reside, as soon as the settlement is fully formed, on this land.

Isaac Thompson, St. Vincent, Ontario  
1865-1886

The homestead land in St. Vincent Township owned jointly by Samuel and Isaac Thompson was reported on glowingly, in Samuel's letter of 1837, as a very promising pioneer farm. In 1865 Samuel's brother Isaac began full-time farming of this land, assisted by his wife, Ada (Fisher), and a growing family. Within three months Isaac found out that the land was far from promising, much of it being an oak ridge with a hard and unproductive soil. Despite this knowledge, the needs of Isaac's family and his lack of capital forced him to remain on this "stiff and sterile" soil for twenty-one years until his death.

Selected extracts from some forty of Isaac's letters to Samuel portray most vividly and poignantly the almost hopeless situation the family had to try to overcome. This story of the Isaac Thompson family at St. Vincent is only one example of the struggle that had to be faced by countless thousands of pioneer farmers who found themselves on inferior land. Their problems became particularly acute when, like Isaac, they were located far from the market and also isolated socially.

## Farmer Isaac's Letters

Extracts from letter (1837) of Samuel Thompson, pioneer at "Nottawasaga" (north of Barrie, Ont.) to brother William, in Kentucky.

Editor's Note: Part of this letter is written across vertically as well as horizontally.

Nottawasaga, July 10, 1837

Dear William,

.....  
 The letter now received (from England) informs us that (sisters) Sophia and Anna have at length finally resolved on joining us.

As to our own property I have to inform you that we have the deed of 200 acres of land in the township of Saint Vincent, within  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mil of Lake Huron (admirable land and an admirable country, so say the Yankees and all who have seen it) where we intend ultimately to reside, as soon as the settlement is sufficiently forward to induce us to remove there - it is 28 miles from this.

Extracts from letters (1865-1886) of Isaac H. Thompson, farmer, (Meaford, St. Vincent and Euphrasia, Ontario) to his brother, Samuel, in Toronto:

May 23rd, 1865 (Meaford)

Your idea of the locality of the chopping is the right one. ....  
 .....  
 This last night has settled the question in my mind against a frame house, we were all thoroughly chilled, Willy and Henry say they shivered all night long.

.....  
 The Chopper, who has been used to House and Barn building, offers to work for me at \$1.00 per day, and board himself.

May 30th, 1865

It takes a waggon load of stone for every foot of depth in building the wall of the well, and our next neighbour says it will be necessary to dig 16 feet deep.

.....  
 I have employed myself sometimes at cutting out the large Scotch thistles in the wheat of which there are a great many and a good sprinkling of Canadian ones too. Today I cut down a Beech and Maple, the Heat was so intense the perspiration poured off my head in streams. It is a queer country - Frozen one day and boiled the next. I am not much in love with it.

June, 1865

When I am ready to have the House raised there will be the expenses of the raising. The Bee will eat a good deal and drink Whiskey.

July 11, 1865

The land on the whole ridge is a great deal too stiff to yield good crops.

July 27, 1865

Mr. Conley speaks of the Hills where our land is as the "Oak Ridges" and says they are "stiff and sterile".

May 14, 1866

I wish if you come you would bring me a pair of Harvest Gloves, they are about  $37\frac{1}{2}$  cents a pair. My hands are so split and sore with handling burnt wood and one dirty thing or other that they are very painfull.

.....  
We tried to get some Ipecacuanha Lozenges, they are recommended for Hooping cough.

.....  
I received the \$30.00. I bought a plough for \$8.00 which is at work. Hamilton is logging up at front.

June 11, 1866

The Doctor says (my condition) denotes Congestion of the Lung, the coughing caused by it gives me great pain in my left shoulder; it is as though some animal has fixed his teeth in my left shoulder joint and the harder I cough the harder he bites.

.....  
There are all sorts of alarming rumors of the doings of the Fenians.  
.....

August 1, 1866

I have just done salting the skin of one of the oxen, the white one, to render it fit for sale. It was found dead in the Bush, quite cold. I cannot account for his death.

.....  
I have commissioned York the Carter to buy 100 bushels of lime and team it to the house. The price is  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents a bushel, the teaming \$5.00.  
.....

P.S. (Aug. 2nd) Snowing! actually snowed this morning - a regular fall of snow - very small but very thick.

Oct. 31, 1866

.....  
I doubt very much that I have done wisely in coming here, the expenses are so large in proportion to the returns. My potato crop is almost totally rotten. I have not more than will last a month from half an acre. The squirrels too have destroyed a great many that the rot spared. Ten bushels is about all the crop, being less than I planted. The grasshoppers did not leave a single plant of turnips, and the wet has destroyed the cabbages.

.....  
My wheat will not yield more than 13 bushels to the acre.

Nov. 3, 1866

.....  
 You will hardly believe the mischief to the crops done by the squirrels, black and red. In my wheat it is estimated that not less than 20 bushels have been eaten and stored away by them. ....  
 ..... I was advised to thresh to save the wheat from them - 180 bushels will be the outside of the quantity from 14 acres. I have about 35 bushels of barley .....twenty to thirty bushels of timothy seed - these with the fat ox includes the whole of my means for the next year.

.....  
 The old gun burst in Willy's hands while shooting a black squirrel; the Nipple flew away singing. It flew away fortunately sideways off the gun.

.....  
 The roads are detestable, as for a long while we have had nothing but rain or snow, this morning a hard frost.

.....  
 I don't see my way clear at all. I have no cattle to work the farm, and the farm does not yield the means. Unless I could clear more land and crop it next season, the returns will be less than this year.

Jan. 31, 1867

.....  
 We are not very well. Ada (his wife Ada Fisher) and the baby are laid up with Diarrhoea, Ada has to take Cholera Medicine. Several of the others have had colds.

Feb. 25, 1867

.....  
 For the last 2 or 3 weeks we have had no meal, and no potatoes for a long time. We have flour and Swedish turnips, which do not furnish much strength to the chopper. I get tired before the day is half done.

April 6, 1867

.....  
 Oxen are very scarce, and selling at \$100 to \$125.

.....  
 From Collingwood to Meaford was nearly all mud. We travelled in a wagon and walked part of the way!!

.....  
 Ada is very much obliged by the present of the preserves and the children were in ecstasy when the box containing them was opened. Tell Sophia and Anna that we are luxuriating in puddings since we got the Box of Fat.

April 23, 1867

.....  
 I have got a large quantity of Bush chopped. It is time to be busy preparing to put in the spring crop and it is necessary that I either get a yoke of cattle or hire them as I cannot do anything with horses in logging.

May 4, 1867

I shall have no difficulty in getting in the crop, as the yoke of cattle is an excellent working and also a very strong one.

May 12, 1867

If you can send my Gooseberry, Currant & Raspberrie trees and plants you may as well. Strawberry plants too if they can be sent. I have cleared some of the ground about the house of Stumps and I should like to have the above things to make the place a little garden-like.

The Steamboat is running (The Bonnie Maggie). There is talk of a trip to Toronto on the Queen's Birthday. Cost per each \$1.00 for both ways.

May 27, 1867

It may be that our children, having had no potatoes all winter, and now eating heartily of them, the change of food affected them. .... It may be that the uncomfortable cold unseasonable weather is the cause of the sickness, or that the use of the water in the well has done it all. It is now stinking and unusable.

July 11, 1867

The question is, will it be worthwhile to go to any further expense on a place as unproductive?

.....  
I shan't write any more now, I am too tired, burning and logging is hard exhausting work, and I have nobody to help me.

P.S. The beans were injured by frost the night before last. The creeks are dried up and we have to use well water which is hardly usable. We have to pump out a quantity every day before it is fit to use.

Sept. 9, 1867

I have succeeded in the road up the Hill, and we can now travel up or down without getting out of the Buggy, without much trouble to the horse. I ploughed it with the cattle first of all, and then levelled it with the spade in half a day. I worked hard at it, and the consequence is a strained hip which makes me feel as though I had the Rheumatism, and have been two or three days limping like Sophia.

Nov. 18, 1867

Winter has fairly set in. ....The ground is covered with snow and the drifting winds are much too keen for me.

.....  
I suppose the five miles walk each day will be better to you than the Homeopathic medicine, and if you could persuade Elizabeth to walk with you you would both be benefitted, especially if you made yourself

comfortable with a glass or two of Allsop's Pale Ale. I have been persuading Anna to take the same walk daily too, but as she would have to go without the Ale perhaps she is right in thinking it would not suit her.

Dec. 29, 1867

I have been called on for school taxes \$11.20. The County Taxes a few cents less than \$30.00. The time is passed nearly a fortnight for paying, by which I am told I have lost my vote in Township matters, which don't trouble me much.

.....  
We got over the Xmas dinner excitement, that is, considering that our bush fare is not remarkable for many delicacies, we had a piece of Beef and a very good Xmas pudding which was not a Xmas pudding, as it wanted Brandy to make it the real thing.

.....  
Ada is calling on me to stop writing and to begin to read. We have read the Fortunes of Nigel and are now in Ivanhoe, which interests much more than the first, which I think is Scott's worst novel.

.....  
We are all well, Anna included, though she appears to feel the cold more than the younger ones. She wishes you to send her some Calcareo Carbonica, Silicea Dulcamara and Belladonna.

March 10, 1868

The thaw has been so rapid that instead of 2 and 3 feet of snow, in many places covering the fences, we have now bare ground and sleighing is at an end - the roads are nearly impassable.

.....  
I lack other grain and have no money to buy it, nor yet to supply our wants in the house for more than 2 months from this; after that we shall have literally nothing to eat, not even potatoes. The failure of our crops was so complete we are brought to this pass.

.....  
This morning I tapped a maple tree hoping the sap was running the thaw has been so great for several days that the frost is completely out of the trees and not a drop of sap was to be seen.

May 14, 1868

The sowing don't get on as fast as should like, owing to the weakness of the sick ox and I have no feed to give them, so that they could only work half time.

.....  
We are living closer and cut a shabbier appearance than you will readily believe. For instance my working clothes and boots are in rags.

.....  
I shall have to do 8 days of Statute labour on the road in a week or two, and I cannot afford to lose the time because if I do my crop will be too late in getting in.

.....  
There has been a fine growing shower today and last night and the country is looking cheerful once more.

June 10, 1868

I have another trouble if you can call it one, my crops are much larger and heavier than those of last year, beyond my ability to cut and harvest them without hiring, and I have no waggon to get them in when ready.

July 16, 1868

We have been more than a month with but one night's rain and everything is being parched up and prematurely ripened. The heat here is excessive. .... My back is blistered with the heat of the sun.

Sept. 7, 1868 (from letter of sister Anna)

The yield of corn will be small - the same with the oats and barley.. .... We are living on the new potatoes and turnips with the addition of an occasional black squirrel or a pigeon.

.....  
Isaac will have to buy his seed wheat as the smut is so much in his crop it is quite unfit for seed.

Oct., 1868

We have had another bit of our usual luck - our Cow died 2 days since - and we therefore have neither milk nor butter.

I believe I did not tell you of the cut I gave my right leg - The Barley was so short (about 8 inches high) that in endeavouring to cut it the cradle scythe caught against a root and gave me a wound across the front of my leg halfway up to the knee. I cut into or through the sinews, and although well now the upper part of my foot is benumbed and seems likely to continue so.

March 18, 1869

I have sold the Oxen at a price which nearly returned the money paid for them - and which money I have paid away all but \$10.00 to the different creditors - and have satisfied most of them, after a fashion.

April 28, 1869

The Photograph I had taken is not a good one, the Thickhead has made me twice as whitehaired as I am ..... I suppose it would be a good likeness of me in fifteen years..... He is going to correct them if he can with Indian ink.

I and Willy & Henry have chopped about 5 acres of Bush on the south half. As I have Rheumatism in my Hip and Back, I found it pretty hard work, having nothing but Mush with Bread and toast and water to drink. We have had Maple Molasses enough to sweeten life a little.

June 22, 1869

Neither of you sending me any money compels me to leave my crop of potatoes open to the cattle from the bush, who are often getting in to them, the fence not yet being completed. Neither can I finish it, on account of the Statute labour that I spoke of, for a week to come.

The continued cold wet weather is having a very injurious effect on the crops, as for the garden things they promise almost nothing.

I have to go to a raising today. I am asked oftener than I like or is convenient.

July 10, 1869

The land about the house wants manure as is evident from the appearance of the Oats at the back of the Privy, from which I dug a drain last year. Where the moisture has drained to they are 2 feet high at 30 yards off, but where it does not reach they are 6 inches high.

Dec. 28th, 1869

Ada and Fanny & Willy & Jenny are gone to witness the doings of the Meaford Christmas Tree exhibition leaving me and Sophia and Baby. I have just played and sung them to sleep.

My wish is, if it could be managed, to leave St. Vincent and again rent a farm within reach of you all as well as the Market of Toronto. I am doing no good here, and for all I can see am not likely to.....  
.....I could have done pretty well, but the Rust and the Midge destroyed it.

.....

I wish the other Children could be receiving the benefit of a decent education. We don't like the idea of sending them to the common schools here, for fear they should learn to be as rough and coarse as the other children that go there. Yet it seems that as the School Bill is passed compelling people to send their children at least 6 months in the year, there is no help for it.

Jan. 24/1870

I will send you my melodeon which you can keep yourself until I can return the money next harvest, or you can sell it for what it will fetch. I must trust to the future to get another, I don't like being without music in the house, especially on Sunday.

Nov. 14, 1870

There is an opinion up here that in consequence of the railroad coming to Meaford, as people generally believe and expect, that land will command much higher prices.

Jan. 4, 1872

May I cut cordwood for sale? I am not very fit for the work now, but (son) Willy is anxious to do something in that way to make up a little for the unprofitable crop of this last season. It could not be sold this season as green wood, besides being too heavy in draft will only fetch \$1.50 a cord. Seasoned wood is \$2.00 a cord and is expected to fetch much more next winter.

March 22, 1872

The drought of last season has left me so completely destitute that I cannot help writing for assistance. That is, I am without the means to purchase seed for this year's crop and for food for ourselves.

I wish I had never seen St. Vincent.

Jan. 27, 1873

I got half frozen two or three days after Minnie left and for three days neither ate nor drank anything - after this I was in great pain and had what Dr. Hall who attended me call Inflammation of the Liver.

Feb. 7, 1874

I have not any money to pay the postage on this letter.

April 7, 1874

I have lost 4 out of 5 heifers for want of sufficient protection from the cold, 2 of them badly frozen. One cow got knee deep through the ice when she went to drink, she was there about  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour while we were at dinner, we have had to raise her up every morning for a month past by a windlass. She is the first one to calve.

March 22, 1875

I have rented a farm at Euphrasia 6 miles from Meaford - 65 acres - it is a good farm - but unassisted I am not able to get seed for the crop.

April 20 - 1875 (Euphrasia)

The house we are in is a shanty so out of order that the snow comes in in all parts of the roof and sometimes covers our bed in the upper room.

May 10, 1876 (Euphrasia)

Minnie (daughter) has not failed to do what she can - she made her mother a present of a Sewing Machine and is now going to send us \$40.00 to help us pay the rent. The boys Willy & Henry are good steady workers at whatever they have to do. Henry is ploughing for Mr. Fisher and Willy is busily engaged at home ploughing. We have 35 acres ploughed ready for a sowing but the season is so rainy that we cant harrow the ground yet..... Our new House is built but has to be plastered yet.

May 26, 1880 (Euphrasia)

If you are disposed to pay us a visit this summer we should be glad to see you all. We have plenty of room in our new house. We have a fine orchard.

May 28, 1886 (Euphrasia, from Isaac's son William)

Dear Uncle,

Father died on the 24th may at half past seven in the morning. He has been in failing health all winter, but did not take to his bed until the 21st.

.....  
Of course it was a great shock to us, especially Mother, but she bore it as well as could be expected.

.....  
The people were kindness itself and did every thing they could to help us.

.....  
Father was very much respected wherever he was known as he deserved to be.

Your affectionate Nephew,  
William Thompson

The rivalry between the Toronto regians and their dear friends of Kingston will continue, and there are very few exiles from the "Queen of the Lakes" who do not view their expatriation with regret.

PART V

YOUNG CIVIL SERVANTS

Alpheus and Alfred Todd

Alpheus and Alfred Todd arrived in Canada as boys in 1833. Samuel Thompson spent much time with them at the Toronto home of their father "one of the most uncompromising Tories I have ever met with". The two boys "got the full benefit of their father's classical attainments and were kept closely to their studies". Their uncle, Wm. P. Patrick, introduced them to the Legislative Assembly as pages, from which lowly position they slowly worked their way to the summit of their respective departments. Alfred rose to the position of Clerk of Committees of the Canadian House of Commons; Alpheus became widely known in Europe and America as Librarian of the Dominion Parliament.

When Parliament moved to Kingston, Alpheus and Alfred moved there also, and carried on for several years an extensive and spirited correspondence with Samuel Thompson in Toronto. From the twenty-six letters 11 extracts have been selected which, like the complete letters, present a picture of the life and thinking of young men - but serious young men - in the Civil Service of that day.

The Todd Letters (1841-1844)

Feb. 21st, 1842

Dear Thompson,

.....

I am pleased to find by the tone of your letter that you are getting a little more reconciled "to men and things" in the metropolis - and am particularly glad to find you are so intimate with the Dixons - as I am sure you will find them very pleasant friends - are you quite sure, however - that the intellectual charms of the 2nd daughter will not overcome your scruples to the married state and induce you to enrol yourself among the "respectable members of society"?

We are quite as dull at Kingston as it is possible for you to be in Toronto - there is literally nothing stirring in any quarter - we are looking forward now for the next English mail, which is daily expected.

The rivalry between the Toronto regions and their dear friends of Kingston still continues, and there are very few exiles from the "Queen of the Lakes" who do not view their expatriation with regret. The dislike of Kingston is almost universal among the strangers - altho the causes of dislike differ perhaps, with every individual. For instance, yesterday, little George Patrick came up to me with a very long face, and told me he "didn't like this Kingston at all" - "why not" - I enquired - "Why," says he "in Toronto you can get six marbles for a copper, and here you can only get four! - and Kingston is such a stony place too!" - This was unanswerable, so I said nothing further on the subject.

Signed,  
Alpheus

Kingston, 31st July, 1842

Dear Thompson,

.....  
Alpheus attained his majority yesterday - he professes to consider it a most unfortunate thing, and pulls a very long face at the thought of being no longer a boy. He has just received a case of books from the old country for the Library, the arranging of which take up much of his time for the present; there is, amongst other things, a very beautiful illustrated copy of Shakespeare (Charles Knight's Edition) which we have at home at present. We are to have a wedding in the morning - I think you have seen the young lady - Mary Ryte, John's sister; whose elegant proportions, powerful arm, and delicious rhubarb pies, so greatly enraptured the unfortunate Dixon; her intended (Mr. Tom Drummond) is the exact counterpart of herself - indeed I have seldom seen a pair better suited to each other; tell Dixon I am sorry he did not succeed there - fate willed it otherwise, and he must bear the disappointment with the best grace he can.

Signed,  
Alfred

The Den, Kingston, 26 Nov. 1842

Dear Thompson,

.....  
I fully shared with you in your feelings of loneliness when you say that you missed our pleasant walks in the fresh morning air in the environs of the Metropolis, and I dare say even to a greater degree, as the one that is left behind generally feels the deprivation more than his departing companion who goes to resume his avocations in a busy world, amongst the turmoil and anxieties of which his active nature soon dispels the feelings which his previous intercourse have engendered and makes them to be numbered among the things that were - With myself it was otherwise - and it was some time before I could bring myself to enjoy my dull companionless existence, or could rouse myself from my bed to take my solitary walk before breakfast - My thought, however, have recently been taken up with an event which though of no importance whatever to another has been so engrossing to myself as to absorb every minor consideration or idea. In other words I have recently made one more mighty struggle to wear Stocks\*, and this time I rejoice to say,

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\*Stocks: "Stiff band of leather or other material formerly worn around neck, now displaced in general use by collar and tie, but surviving in some military uniforms and sometimes revived in modified form by fashion."

have succeeded. Altho' personal considerations alone would scarcely have impelled me to such a step, yet I felt so strongly the propriety on other grounds of so doing, that I made up my mind at last to repeat the attempt - and am now luxuriating in the pleasure of having overcome a prejudice which I deemed insurmountable, and of having made myself, in this respect at any rate, something like other people.

Signed,  
Alpheus

The Den, Kingston -  
14th April, 1843

Dear Thompson,

.....

I was scarcely surprised at your remarking upon the insinuations of my last respecting the contents of your letters to me - Now you know I generally say what I think - and the fact is that the two previous letters I received from you were so commonplace and uninteresting that nothing but your bona fide signature at the bottom could have enabled to guess them to have proceeded from you - Such is not usually the case, I need scarcely say - but as I look upon your mental endowments to be of no ordinary kind I do not think it is too much to expect you to exert them a little when engaged in keeping up, in the only possible way, intercourse with a friend - The letters in question were uninteresting chiefly, I believe, on account of them being comments upon what I had expressed to you, and not "new matter" - this ought, perhaps, to have made me feel flattered by the concern it evinced in my welfare and movements, but a letter from you is too rare an occurrence to be suffered to consist of almost entirely such trivial topics - Instead of the slight allusion to your wilfulness, I had prepared, or rather considered, a sharper attack - respect for your mature years, however, prevented me from using it, and I determined to try first a milder preparation, in hopes that it might prove efficacious, and prevent, on my part, a repetition of the complaint.

Signed,  
Alpheus

Kingston, 6th June (!!) 1843

Dear Thompson,

I dare say you will laugh at my continual excuses for writing so short a letter and so seldom, but some how or other I find my time so nicely filled up with one thing and another through the day that it is a hard matter for me to manage anything in the shape of a letter, however short. We had a great day here yesterday which I dare say you have heard some talk about; the Governor General, attended by a large and fine looking procession, proceeded "with great pomp" to the market place, and laid the corner stone of the new market house, amid the roar of artillery and the patter of rain, which latter, after a month's holiday, particularly selected that and the two previous days for its gambols, in no wise, however, damping the ardor (tho' it might the coats) of those engaged in the affair, they having before their eyes a small bright spot in the horizon well filled with capons, joints and pasties, with spirits ardent as themselves to wash them down, or in other words, plenty of "heavy wet" to compensate for their heavy wetting. The dinner came off splendidly, but I am not prepared to say that it would have done so but for my humble exertions and those of my gleesome

brethren Messrs. McDonnell and Brent. - The Mayor and several influential gentlemen informed us that His Excellency was a great admirer of music, and would be delighted if we could tip him a stave in the vocal way, - we therefore got ready as well as we could on a very short notice, and produced "Non nobis Domine" in very passable style (though I say it, etc.) on the removal of the cloth, - followed by appropriate songs and glees after the several toasts; - among the glees were "Hail, smiling morn" (sand on His Excy's. health being drank) - "God save the Queen" (after Her Majesty's - which of course took precedence.) "Hark, Italy's Music" - The Indian Drum; The bark before the Gale (to Sir R. Peel and the Ministry) etc., etc., etc., etc; and there were several solos sang very fairly by Bilton, H. Smith, Sen'r. and others. The little Mayor made a great goose of himself in speechifying, though particularly warned against it by the managers, but he succeeded in putting everybody in good humor, with his blunders and good nature, and didn't seem to care a bit that the laugh was at his own expense. His Excellency was very affable and pleasant, and on his health being drank, responded in a very neat little speech. Our dear old Toronto was not forgotten - "Our Sister City of Toronto" being the first volunteer toast, - and it was drank with immense applause and responded to by Mr. Alderman Dixon, (who was present as a guest) - and in point of fact, though he came totally unprepared, his speech was by ~~very~~ far the best of the evening, containing some very pretty sentiments, with a highly poetical flourish about the Irish motto "Quis separabit?" - mixed up with plenty of Church State, and a leetle bit of blarney about the very affectionate feelings of sister Toronto etc. His Excellency took his departure at 12 o'clock, expressing himself highly delighted with his entertainment; I waited for another hour, and then, finding the mirth wax fast and furious, followed His Excellency's example. The whole affair went off very pleasantly, and considering the high price of the tickets (six dollars) the attendance was very numerous; dinner was provided for 150, and I think that fully that number were present.

Signed,  
Alfred

Kingston, 10th August, 1843

Dear Thompson,

.....

The project of housekeeping which you are contemplating will, I doubt not be found very pleasant in practice, at any rate, it will be a step taken towards housekeeping with a sleeping partner, which I hope you will one day undertake. I am determind, if the opportunity is permitted me, some day or other to try the experiment myself, till that happy day arrives I should like to see the workings of the system in the case of my friends, and should you be prevailed upon to break the rule of celibacy your family appear to have adopted, it would give me the sincerest pleasure to be admitted to a personal inspection of your domestic happiness. Already, the opportunity I possess of viewing "Double-blessedness" in practice, in the Dodger's household, has given me no little experience, and I trust when it falls to my lot to follow his example, that I shall prove that I have benefited thereby.

.....

You alluded in your last to the fact of Dixon's being in a great stew lately in consequence of a letter he had received from me. I have something to say to you about that. You remember our conversation on board the steamboat from Toronto respecting Dixon, and his newly discovered passion for a certain fair friend of mine - Well you know we

both joined in condemning it heartily, and as you declined the task of bringing him to reason, I undertook it myself. Accordingly I wrote him a stinger, something after the same sort as the one I sent him when he was afflicted with the Wilson mania. I regret to add, however, that my praiseworthy efforts were not in this, as in the former instance, crowned with the success they merited. I could easily, I think, divine the cause of this. In the one case love was struggling against policy, and almost every other principle, and in the other, it is stimulated by Ambition. But be that as it may, I received a very indignant reply, breathing as old Capt. Kearns used to say "all kinds of murder" and manifesting that the medicine if not powerful enough to work a cure, had very much disturbed his stomach!

Signed,  
Alpheus

Kingston, 20th Sept., 1843

My dear Friend,

.....  
So much for personal affairs, and now for a word or two respecting the affairs of the Province. You will have shared with the vast majority of Upper Canada in the feelings of exultation which arose in every loyal breast, at the glad tidings of the fall of the Baldwin and Lafontaine Cabinet, and in the heartfelt gratitude which every lover of British Supremacy must feel to our noble Gov.Genl. for the manly stand he has taken against the innovating principles of democracy which had well nigh swept away every bulwark against the tide of infidelity in Church and State which our unrivalled Constitution affords.

Signed,  
Alpheus

Kingston, 26 Sept. 1843

Dear Thompson,

.....  
While upon the subject of unrequited affections I may as well tell you that the engagement of Mr. Henry Steele with a young lady up in the north, of which I believe you were aware, has been broken off - ostensibly upon the ground of that gent's increase being too small to permit him to change his condition at present, but really, on account of his having changed his mind, and carried his flirtations with the young lady here to an inexcusable length considering his position with another.

Signed,  
Alpheus

Kingston, 23rd March, 1844

Dear Thompson,

I am not quite sure that you do not owe me a letter, but I must send you one nevertheless, to give an account of our Harmonic doings here. Our first concert was so well liked that we had applications from all quarters to make the admission more general in future; the result of which was a resolution on our part to admit as honorary members such candidates as might not be possessed of the musical qualifications required in ordinary members. We had in consequence to get a larger room for our concerts, and the last two were given in a large room kindly lent us by Mr. Wilson - the audiences at each consisting of from 200 to 250 of the elite of the metropolis. The publicity of our per-

performances, however, was a thing by no means relished by a large proportion of our acting members, and we therefore determined, after fully considering the matter, to break up the Society in toto and reorganize it, for the double purpose of laying our honorary members and the public on the shelf, and also of getting rid of a few troublesome acting members.

Signed,  
Alfred

P.S. I send you a programme of our last concert.

KINGSTON HARMONIC SOCIETY

THIRD PRIVATE CONCERT  
Thursday, 7th March, 1844

P R O G R A M M E

PART 1st

- Overture - To the Opera of "Il Seraglio" ...Mozart. Full Orchestra.  
 Glee - The Bark before the Gale.....Sir J.Stevenson. McDonald,  
 Song - A Life on the Ocean Wave.....Russel. Spragge. Brent & Todd.  
 Air With Variations - Recollections of  
 Mont Blanc - (Flute and Piano Forte) Hepburn & Todd.  
 Duett - Love and the Sun Dial.....Sir J.Stevenson.McD & Br.  
 Song - "Woodman, spare that Tree".....Russel. Godard.  
 Fantasia - Selection from Opera of Norma -  
 Violin and Piano Forte.....Bellini. Nordheimer & Todd.  
 Finale - "Di Felice" - from "Il Barbieri" -  
 (Duett, Piano Forte).....Rossini, Todd & McDonald.

PART 2nd

- Overture - To Il Barbieri di Seviglia .....Rossini. Full Orchestra.  
 Glee - "Come to the Old Oak Tree".....Divereaux.McD, Roche & Todd.  
 Song - "Tu Vedrair" (from Il Pirata)....Bellini. Nordheimer.  
 Overture - to Ma-on (Piano Forte, Flute and  
 Violoncello).....Auber. Martin, Brent & Todd.  
 Glee - Mynheer Van Dunck.....Bishop. McD.Br. & Todd.  
 Song - The Sea.....Chevalier Neukomm.Murney.  
 Overture - to Norma (Piano Forte).....Bellini. Todd.  
 Catch - Old Chairs to mend..... McD.B. & T.  
 Song - The Little Lady..... McDonald.  
 Sonata - With Air Ecossois..... Pleyel. Full Orchestra.  
 Chorus - God save the Queen.

Easter Sunday, 1844

Dear Thompson,

.....

I need not remind you that when in Toronto I was a warm admirer of the "Oxford Tracts" - for you will not have forgotten the many friendly altercations on the subject which have taken place between us - Then, however, so to speak - I had a zeal which was not according to knowledge - For altho' a strenuous advocate for such of the truths contained in those papers which it had been my lot to see - yet, from the difficulty of obtaining either the Tracts themselves, or writings illustrative of their opinions in Toronto - I was scarcely a sufficient judge of the tendency or truthfulness of the doctrine which they proposed to expand. Since then, however, I have been fortunate enough to obtain many of the Tracts and also to see several reviews and critical notices of the movement generally so as to be able to give a more matured if not a correcter opinion upon their merits than formerly - The result of my investigation has been to confirm me in my previous impressions, and to convince me that these doctrines are not only strictly orthodox and agreeable to the Liturgies and Articles of the Church of England but that they are a revival of a purer and holier spirit than the Church has exhibited, as a body, for several centuries - and that in the correct understanding and faithfully conforming to which alone, can the visible Church expect to be preserved in these days of liberalism and infidelity - And in arriving at this conclusion, as I remember to have seen well expressed in a letter from a clergyman upon the subject which appeared in a periodical some months ago - if one thing more than another would manifest its soundness and weigh more in an impartial mind than the earnest and humble piety of the Tractenians themselves - or the lofty-soul-inspiring nature of the truths they recall to the recollections of the Church - it is this - that in the controversy, if such it may be called, when the recrimination is all on one side - these men bear evident marks of being the reviled and not the reviless - So much so that if you look at the writings which emanate from either side - you will see from the evangelicals - or whatever name you may choose to give them, nothing but abusive epithets - cries of "Popery" - and denunciations of the most bitter and unchristian kind - without one single attempt from any quarter to prove by fair reasoning, or by analogy, or in any other method, the scriptural unsoundness of the doctrines upheld by their opponents or indeed anything in the way of confutation further than an attempt to overthrow the entire fabric by overturning some trifling detail which they either misunderstand or misrepresent - On the other side, upon the contrary - while there is no disputations controversy - nor dealings in argument for arguments sake - you will find a plain straightforward declaration of principles, easily to be understood - and expressing practical, not theoretical doctrine - in pointed and forcible - not mysterious and general terms - It must be remembered also - that it is no proof - because the advocates for these doctrines make no parade of them and do not indulge in newspaper controversy, that they are not gaining ground among intelligent, deep-thinking men - for by a statement contained in a Dissenting Journal I find it admitted that 11, out of the 15,000 clergy of the established Church in England are prepared to endorse, as sound and scriptural, these opinions so much reviled by their Low-Church and No-Church opponents -

If I had time I should be glad of the opportunity to explain myself a little further, and to give you a few of the facts upon which my convictions are based, as it is, however, I must wait for a more

favourable opportunity, when I hope a temporary renewal of our former intercourse may enable me to state to you more satisfactorily than by letter - my opinions of the "Oxford Tract gentry" -

There is one thing further, however, which I cannot refrain from alluding to - viz - the somewhat equivocal acts of two or three English clergymen in placing Crosses on their Altars, and genuflecting before them during Divine Service - With reference to this I must say that while I look upon it as highly improper and inexcusable - I have never seen anything in the writings in question to authorise or sanction it - and further I am firmly persuaded that no clergyman of the sound religious opinions of Dr. Pusey or any of his more intelligent fellow labourers would for an instant approve of it - At the same time, it is not to be wondered at that at a time when such a shaking is manifest in the Churches - and when so many are rousing themselves from the extremes and extravagances of dissent and latitudinarianism into which they have fallen - that a few, in seeking to recover themselves, should be temporarily or partially hurried into an opposite extreme, And that it is but a few, is apparent from the rarity of such instances among the numerous class who are holding opinions in common with Dr. Pusey and the others of the Oxford divines.

Adieu,

Signed,  
Alpheus

Kingston, 5th April, 1844

Dear Thompson,

.....  
Alfred tells me that he wrote to you a short time ago, so I suppose he has informed you of our intended arrangements about removing to Montreal. Having a good house on his hands he will delay it, if possible for another year. There is another reason which perhaps he omitted to tell you, viz: - that his good lady is now in a very "interesting condition" and contemplates within a very few weeks presenting him with a pledge of her affection, and making your humble servant an Uncle. This event had been so long delayed that I began to despair of ever attaining to the dignity, but this year there have been so many good examples given her on all sides that she has rather unexpectedly, shewn a disposition to follow them.

Signed,  
Alpheus

letters presented here confirm this fact, and illustrates the faith John A. had both in Samuel Thompson and in G.W. Allan, whose letter is also quoted. The same faith and generosity is exhibited in the two letters referring to John Sheridan Hogan, a promising young journalist and politician who met a tragic end in 1858, having been murdered.

PART VI

JOHN A. MACDONALD

Fellow Tories, Macdonald and Thompson

During his first few years as a pioneer farmer (1834-37) Samuel Thompson found most of his friends among the Reform element in Upper Canada. However, Samuel's basic political tenet was faith in the British monarchy and the Empire, which faith he held to his dying day. It is, therefore, understandable that the Republican and pro-American overtones of the Rebellion of 1837 turned him toward the Tories of that era - even influencing him to modify his religious faith from Swedenborgian to the established Church of England.

As his journalistic ventures expanded, Samuel Thompson became an increasingly vocal and influential backer of Conservative policies and politicians. In 1843 he met George Brown, who impressed him favourably as a promising young "Conservative", but who later became the fiery Liberal "Grit" leader, and editor of the "Globe", arch rival paper to the Conservative "Tory" newspapers edited by Samuel Thompson, particularly the "Colonist" of 1854-1858.

John A. Macdonald, who entered politics as a member for Kingston about the same time as Brown was an influential delegate to the first general assembly of the British American League in 1849 - "an event of first magnitude in our annals". At this meeting in the Town Hall at Kingston Samuel Thompson met Macdonald, who strongly supported the Resolution "That delegates be appointed to consult with similar delegates from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick concerning the practicability of a union of all the provinces".

From 1849 until after Confederation Samuel Thompson was a personal friend and staunch supporter of "John A" who was particularly pleased when Samuel became editor of the Conservative organ in Toronto, the "Colonist". The first of the six

letters presented here confirms this fact, and illustrates the faith John A. had both in Samuel Thompson and in G.W. Allan, whose letter is also quoted. The same faith and generosity is exhibited in the two letters referring to John Sheridan Hogan, a promising young journalist and politician who met a tragic end in 1858, having been murdered by a gang of thieves in Toronto. Other interesting facets of the political life of the day include the common tendency to mix politics and business in speculative ventures, the resulting desperate shortages of money when depressions hit, and the uninhibited reference to the use of patronage.

The closest relations between John A. Macdonald and Samuel Thompson existed when Thompson was editor of the Colonist (1854-58), followed by a period, 1859-60, when Thompson was government printer at Quebec and editor and publisher of "The Mirror of Parliament", the forerunner of Parliamentary Hansard. The Financial Accounts of this venture (which are still in the possession of the editor) show that both English and French versions of this first "Parliamentary Hansard" were published (beginning Feb. 29, 1860), running eight to sixteen pages, the circulation normally being 1000 - 1500 copies.

As has been previously quoted, but merits repetition, Sir John once said personally to Samuel Thompson: "I don't care for office for the sake of money, but for the sake of power, and for the sake of carrying out my own views of what is best for the country."

#### The Six Macdonald (and Allan) Letters (1854-1862)

Letter (1854) from John A. Macdonald to Samuel Thompson, journalist, of Toronto:

Kingston, 21 March 1854

Dear Sir:

I have your favor of the 15th - The arrangement with Mr. Allan is perfectly satisfactory to me and I have no doubt that it will be Equally so to Vankoughnet.

Our only object was to secure the services of a reliable Conservative paper at Toronto. Gowan's defection and the non-political position of the "Colonist" left the party without an organ in the chief town of Upper Canada. I thought it of great importance that this state of things should not continue. With this View the arrangement with you was made

altho' it was rather inconvenient both for Van & myself to advance the money. The object is fully obtained by your becoming the untrammelled proprietor of the Colonist. I am satisfied that it will be conducted on broad Conservative principles and will not be used for the purpose of advancing or depressing any section of the party.

I have not the pleasure of knowing Mr. Allan, but from all I can hear of him, he is worthy of the Confidence of the party.

His loan to you is certainly given in the handsomest manner.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,  
John A. Macdonald

Letter from G.W. Allan to Samuel Thompson, referred to in the letter of John A. Macdonald preceding:

Moss Park, March 9, 1854

My dear Sir:

In answer to the proposal which you made to me yesterday, to advance a sum of money (to be secured by mortgage on real estate) to enable you to carry out your plans for the publication of the Colonist newspaper, I beg to say; that I am willing to advance the money upon the following conditions:-

First: That I shall be your sole creditor, so far as the funds for carrying on the newspaper are concerned; and in order to my being so, I shall be prepared to advance 1000 Pounds, the whole amount you say you shall require for that purpose.

Secondly - The money so advanced to be secured by a first mortgage on the property owned by you at Weston.

In proposing these conditions I do not wish you to imagine for a moment, that I seek to possess such an exclusive interest in the Colonist, as would give me any supposed rights to dictate the course the paper should pursue, with regard to its advocacy, or otherwise, of a particular political measure, or to insist upon its supporting, exclusively, some particular candidates for political honour. Such is not the kind of connexion I should desire to have with any paper. - I should as a matter of course; expect the Colonist to be on all occasions, the staunch advocate of Conservative principles, and the great inducement to me, to enter into this arrangement undoubtedly is, that by doing so I shall be contributing to the support, of what I will trust become, the leading Conservative paper in Canada. Beyond this general pledge to uphold "Conservative men and measures" - I require nothing from you, that I might not ask had I no interest in the paper. In making it a condition that I shall be your sole creditor, so far as furnishing the funds for carrying on the paper are concerned, I do so simply on business grounds.

Without the slightest reference to who the parties may be, - in all money transactions, especially where there is a loan in the case, I think the fewer concerned the better - it saves all risk of future misunderstanding, and therefore I much prefer, in the present instance,

a sole to a joint interest!

I remain, dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,  
G.W. Allan

Letter (1854) from John A. Macdonald to Samuel Thompson:

Quebec, Nov. 13th 1854

Private -

My dear Sir

A multitude of calls and uncertainties have prevented me writing you before. Since I saw you at Kingston I have had no conversation with Hogan (John Sheridan Hogan) as to Newspaper and financial matters. His language and demeanour has been so hostile to the Govt and in fact so offensive that I have avoided conversation with him. What the cause is, I don't know, and can only suppose that it arises from his not having been consulted when the new arrangements were made. You say you wrote to me that Mr. Hogan had written you that he had seen me and that he found me indisposed to advance the sum named. Now I can assure you that he never spoke to me on this subject - nor did he allude to the matter at all until a day or two after I got your last letter. I suppose you had informed him that you had written to me, and he therefrom called me aside and told me he had no disposition to make the proposed arrangement. He did not hint at the probability of my aiding him in any way. He felt doubtless that his course had been such as to sever his interests from mine permanently.

I did not show him your letter as it would only have let him know that his want of truth had been exposed - and I did not see any object in subjecting him to the humiliation. You may fancy his reserve when I tell you that on your draft for the £30 arriving here without notice - I spoke to him on this subject and he affected not to know anything about it. He asked me if you had not written me before at the time of drawing, and on my replying in the negative he said that you - doubtless would do so. He did not venture to say that it was drawn at his instance.

I see by the tone of his correspondence that there is no chance of accord between him and myself. We must therefore shape our several courses without reference to the opinion of the other.

There seems to be a growing desire among the members of the House for an adjournment near Christmas.

If the Government are obliged to yield to the pressure I shall go to Toronto and talk over the matter with you.

It is of importance to us together and of the Reputable press and of such a paper as the Colonist and we must endeavor to aid our Supporters by all the Government patronage in our power. However, we will do these things better Viva Voce.

I am, my dear Sir

Yours faithfully  
John A. Macdonald

S. Thompson Esq.

P.S. I shall draw for the £30 at Maturity.

Letter (1854) from John A. Macdonald to Samuel Thompson, Editor of the "Colonist", Toronto:

Quebec, 21 Dec. 1854

Dear Sir:

I have been so much employed in winding up our arduous Session, that I have been unable to write you before.

I have not heard of or seen your drafts as mentioned in your letter of the 14th Dec.

It will be very inconvenient for me to increase my liabilities just now, as like my Neighbors I speculated too deeply in the days of prosperity and am now at my Wits' End to raise the Ways and Means. By the way, what has become of the 30 Pounds draft which I accepted for you - I kept no Memo of date at Bank. Has it become due? When is it?

Hogan and I got on quite harmoniously. He sees in fact that there is every probability of the present Gov't. being a lasting one, and the questions on which he differs from our Course being now settled he can give us the required support.

Mr. Cayley left for Toronto yesterday - Pray see him about these matters.

It is yet uncertain whether I can go up to Toronto - I leave for Kingston tomorrow and will be glad to hear from you there.

I will endeavor when at home, and raise this much for you for a little, (help), but with what success I cannot yet say.

In great Haste,

Yours respectfully,  
John A. Macdonald

John A. Macdonald to Samuel Thompson:

Office of Attorney General for  
Upper Canada  
Quebec, 25th January, 1855.

Confidential

My dear Sir:

When I received Mr. Caley's letter at Kingston, I was busy with attempts to set my money affairs to rights and to balance my acc. at the Bank. I therefore delayed answering him or writing to you, until I saw how I succeeded - On getting his telegraph, I wrote or rather prepared a letter stating that I was unable to afford any pecuniary assistance, but afterwards withheld it thinking that I might be able to send a different answer. My attempts have been unsuccessful and I was obliged to leave Kingston, leaving my money matters in a bad way and trusting to the Bank's kindness for a while - The fact is that I had, like others last year, speculated too heavily in real estate. The lands are on my hands and the purchase monies are falling due and I am just to my wit's end to make my payts. -

It is out of my power just now to advance £750 or even £150 and such being the case it would be wrong for me to undertake liabilities which I am certain not to be able to meet - The origin of our having business relations together was with the advance of £500 by VanKoughmet and myself - on security - to aid the "Patriot". Subsequently that affair was cancelled and so it ended - You having as I understand, made arrangements on the occasion of your buying the Colonist with Mr. Allen, for the necessary funds - Nothing more transpired and I considered you within Allen's hands until last Autumn (some three months ago) when you wrote me that Hogan had advised you that I was not prepared to come down with a sum of money to enable him (Hogan) to enter into partnership with you -

Now I had never heard of the desire of Hogan and yourself to get my assistance until then, Hogan never spoke to me on the subject as I think I wrote you - You then asked me for a pecuniary advance, and my reply was that I had no money but would if I could get you some bank Accommodation at Kingston. This I failed in as the Banks refused all accommodation and I was not in a situation to ask favours from the Commercial.

It appears to me that your only remedy is to borrow from Allan who has now got security and has plenty of money. There is no especial reason why I individually more than Caley (Or McNab or indeed any leading man of the party) should be called upon for so large a sum as £750 - However, if I had the money or the means of raising it I would have had no hesitation, on being properly secured, in meeting your drafts.-

It was, it seems to me, extremely unwise of you to value on me for this large sum, making me presumably liable for the whole ammount without entering into and completing an agreement on the subject - I shall have a talk with Caley on the subject tonight, but meanwhile think it well to write to you.

Yours very truly,  
John A. Macdonald.

S. Thompson Esq.  
Toronto.

Letter to Samuel Thompson from John A. Macdonald:

Quebec, March 14/62

Dear Sir

Absence from Town first of Mr. Galt and then of myself has prevented me from answering your letter. We both feel disinclined to become shareholders in any Insurance Company and would prefer to leave things as they are.

You would do us a service by adjusting accounts with Mr. B--- as to the Sale of the Colonist and informing us of the result.

Yours truly,  
John A. Macdonald

Samuel Thompson Esq.  
Box 737 Post Office, Toronto

## PART VII

## A VICTORIAN WIFE AND MOTHER

Mary Thomson-Thompson - U. E. L.

Samuel Thompson's second wife was Mary Thomson, of United Empire Loyalist stock, third generation of one of the earliest settlers of Scarborough. When they married in 1871 Mary was thirty-eight and Samuel was sixty-one. At this period Mr. Thompson was the very prosperous head of the Beaver Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and the owner of a lovely suburban Toronto home. Samuel was proud to take his relatively young wife to England to introduce Frankie, the child of his old age, to the many English relatives.

Five years later, however, disaster struck in the forced winding up of the Beaver Mutual by the Mackenzie Liberal regime. Using all his resources to pay the obligations involved, Samuel was left penniless. For the last ten years of his life he had a hard struggle to make ends meet, his last money-making efforts being appointment as Assistant Librarian (Toronto) and his publication of the "Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer".

Such a sudden and extreme reversal in fortunes could easily have resulted in despair or recrimination on the part of the wife. However the eighty or so letters Mary wrote to her husband both from England and during summer holiday visits in Ontario demonstrate a remarkable emotional stability in this Victorian wife and mother. The thirteen extracts quoted here from her letters confirm that Samuel Thompson, in his later years, was blessed with a most affectionate and understanding wife. Certainly her simple farm background as a member of a large pioneer family of Scarborough seems to have provided a lifelong stabilizing influence in Mary Thomson Thompson.

## Mary's Letters - and Courage (1871-1883)

Letter (1871) from Mary Thomson, youngest daughter of George Thomson, Scarborough pioneer, to Samuel Thompson, accepting his proposal of marriage:

Aikenshaw (Ont) March 29, 1871

Dear Mr. Thompson,

Your kind letter was a great surprise to me, but I know of no objection to complying with your request - for I have always had a great respect for you, and although we do not know each other very well I think I would have no fear in committing my future happiness to your keeping - if after conversing on the subject you do not change your mind. Your age is not so strong an objection as you imagine, for I will be thirty-eight, if I live till the 28th of next month!

I am thankful to say I am now in perfect health; but rather sad at heart because I have lately returned from a farewell visit to one of my brothers, who is dying of consumption, and in all human probability will not survive many days.

Perhaps you are not aware that I have five brothers scattered over the world - who have had to make a living with very few advantages - therefore are by no means polished in manner - but as far as I know perfectly steady etc.; my only remaining sister is married to a good steady farmer and lives near Ingersoll. I think you know the rest of my relations - so if you still have the same opinion of me I will be happy to see you whenever you think proper to come here. In the meantime, believe me

Yours sincerely,  
Mary Thomson

(Ont.) May 8th 1871

My dear Mr. Thompson,

.....  
But though all the surroundings here are so gloomy I am so happy at heart that they do not seriously affect me - I feel that as long as I am sure of your love all trials will be light; hoping to see you tomorrow. Believe me, dearest, Yours always affectionately,  
Mary Thomson

Extract from letter (1876) from Mary to her husband Samuel

North Oxford (Ont.) Aug. 4, 1876

Dear Samuel,

There was no difficulty about changing cars at Hamilton - Frankie was as good as could be, and slept most of the time.

I was here twenty-five years ago - I know by yesterday being Johnny's birthday and I was here when he was born - but I think more of the few days you were here with me five years ago. I loved you then, dear, but how much more now my own dear Samuel. Write soon and believe me, your ever affectionate wife  
Mary

Agincourt (Ont) Aug. 2nd 1877

My dear Husband

.....  
 I wish you could see your way clearly to something better than the "Beaver" (Mutual Fire Insurance Co.) has been to you - for I suppose the "Home" will not have any attraction for you unless under other management than at present. I do not fear but that as long as you have health you will get some means of making a living.

Agincourt (Ont.) Sept.10,1877

.....  
 I will enclose Franky's letter to you which he has just finished:

Enclosure, from Frank W. Thompson, born June 14th, 1873, aged 4 years and 3 months.

PAPA

HOW ARE YOU

Whitley (Ont.) Sept.26th 1877

.....  
 Do as you think best, my dear Husband. I will be satisfied with your decision and try to do anything in my power to help out a small income.

London (Ont.) July 15, 1879

.....  
 I can hardly realize it all - I cannot help regretting to leave that house just now when I am sure it will be so nice; but the sooner the move is over the better since it has to be.

London (Ont.) Sept. 11, 1882

(Enclosed letter from son Franky, aged 9 yrs. 3 mos.)

My dear papa,

forgive me for not writing to you before but I began a Letter and could not finish it. I had such a nice boat given to me in Guelph - she is a schooner and sails nicely. I have named her the Ocean Queen she is fore anaft rigged and is about a foot long and she has a little lifeboat, she has but one mast she had two, at first, but did not sail well so I took it off, I bought a Japanese kite it was about a foot long to. Now as I have to close I give you my gem so goodbye. I remain your affectionate son

Frank Thompson

(Enclosure: pencil sketches of the boat and the kite)

Editor's note: A second enclosure by Frank included the following "Alice has given me a lovely little Kittne. I should like to know please if I may bring it to Toronto because it is such a dear little thing. do let me wont you please do."

Ingersoll (Ont.) June 24/83

.....  
 Your idea of going out to Saskatoon (Saskatchewan farm - at husband's age of seventy-three) is I think a good one - and if you should find it a desirable place for a home and meet with any chance of making a better living I would not hesitate to take advantage of it.

London (Ont.) June 29th/83

.....  
 Now dearest I must tell you how sorry I am for your disappointment about the secretary-ship and how mean it seems that the salary should be cut down so low, still I think you are right to take the position small as the pay is - on the principle that "half a loaf is better than no bread".

Waterloo (Ont.), July 6/83

Your letter of the 3rd was so much more hopeful that it quite cheered me - it is odd that something or other should always take us back to the neighbourhood of Yorkville - can you give me any idea when it will be necessary to move there?

London (Ont.) July 10/83

They certainly are not over liberal - still \$200 for five months work is better than nothing. I suppose we will have to learn to live upon that.

Ingersoll (Ont.) Aug. 21st/83

I think we could manage without buying too much in the way of furnishings - we might get a second hand cooking stove, and some of the packing cases should do for kitchen table, cupboards etc. - would rather enjoy the contriving and managing.

Guelph (Ont.) August 27/83

My dear Husband,

I have been thinking about you all day and wishing I had made arrangements to spend your birthday with you. I hope you have not been very dull, dearest, and that you may live to spend many more with me.

..... I ought to be one of the happiest of women and I feel that I have great cause for thankfulness.

Your affectionate wife,  
 Mary Thompson

## PART VIII

## UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS AMONG "REMINISCENCES OF A CANADIAN PIONEER"

## Samuel Thompson's Memoirs and Forecasts

The original manuscripts prepared by Samuel Thompson for "Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer" (1884), include several chapters and sections which were not published. This remaining material has been reviewed and selections made of items which appear to be of interest today. The two last sections, "Europe Revisited" and "The Future of Canada" include forecasts which prove rather intriguing three quarters of a century later in the light of the unrealized factors and the actual turn of events.

The new section on the "Future of Canada" is simply a detailed forecast related to the Canadian Northwest. In "Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer", Samuel Thompson envisaged autonomy for the Negro race in the United States, the possible separation of Quebec and related French Canada, and the possible junction of the Maritime Provinces and Ontario with the United States. As an ardent supporter of the British monarchy and Empire (maintained by British naval supremacy) Samuel Thompson reasoned that the Hudson's Bay Route and the complementary economies of Britain and the Northwest would hold these two regions together. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Thompson's forecasts is that he certainly realized that Canada, with its two races and its diverse regions, might easily disintegrate in the foreseeable future. The main cement in Confederation, as he saw it then, was the British connection. He did not seem to conceive of that developing common loyalty to Canada itself, which we of today realize provides our best hope for the unity and future of our nation.

## From Emigrant Fever to the Great Northwest

## The Emigrant Fever

In the year 1849 occurred the failure of the Irish potato crop, which was followed by a pestilence scarcely less formidable than the plague of the middle ages. The population of the Emerald Isle is said to have shrunk from seven to four and a half millions in that single year, in some small degree due to emigration, but mainly from actual famine. How awful the record of anguish, terror and suffering comprised in these brief words!

Well do I remember daily helping groups of freshly arrived emigrants sitting and lying about on Wellington Street and near the Emigrant Office on the corner of Scott and Front streets - fearful objects, most of them; young infants reduced to mere skeletons, their haggard mothers vainly striving to soothe their feeble wailings, the fathers more like spectres than living men. There was a vacant piece of land opposite my house, in which some slight temporary shelter was provided and rations of food dealt out to the unhappy creatures, who used to come to my garden well for water.

Alderman G.W. Allen, then a young man, was among the most active in removing the sick and dying to the hospital. Even when the police and hospital servants shrunk terrified from the loathsome task, he carried the fever-stricken wretches in his arms from their squalid beds to the cabs, which he had hired at his own cost to convey them to the hospital.

The Toronto city authorities acted well on the occasion, Mayor Gurnett especially being untiring in the work. The clergy and medical men of Toronto generally did their duty nobly, at the sacrifice of their own lives in numerous instances. Among the martyrs to duty will be remembered the names of Bishop Power, Dr. Grasett, Dr. Hamilton, Rev. W.N. Ripley - and yet no public memorial has been erected in their honour.

## The Village of Carlton, 1853

In 1853 the village of Carlton consisted of two taverns, a blacksmith shop and a dozen frame dwellings, which possessed a questionable reputation such as that now enjoyed by other small suburbs of Toronto. Young men of the labouring class met to play quoits and tenpins on Sunday. Firearms were heard at all hours. Respectable women could hardly pass along the plank road without annoyance. The late Rev. Kennedy, then Secretary of the Diocesan Society, saw these things, and resolved if possible to reform them. Calling to his aid a young clergyman then just ordained - the Rev. Walter Stennett (later Canon Stennett of Cobourg) they organized meetings for divine services in the open air, amidst the tall pines and oak undergrowth of the Pine Plains. Half a dozen wooden forms, an old desk, an earthen basin, and some other trifles constituted our whole preparations for worship. And right blessed were they! Sunday after Sunday throughout that summer - in winter transferring our furniture to a room in an old labourer's dwelling - one or other of those two worthy servants of the Most High continued their ministrations. Sunday after Sunday did "hymns and psalms and spiritual songs" take the place of low ribaldry and obscene blasphemy, until Carlton ceased to be a by-word and a shame to the neighbourhood, and has ever since borne a fair character for sobriety, order, and the observance of the laws of

God and man.

About the same time, a small Methodist congregation which had assembled on Dundas Street, about a mile south of the village, was removed to Davenport Road, near Carlton Station, by the exertions of George Cooper, Esq., its original founder. It was afterwards taken in charge by the Rev. Jonathon Scott and the Rev. D. Wood, both men of eminent position in the Methodist body.

#### George Brown and his "Grit" Globe

When George Brown became editor of the Globe (1844?) it was not long before we of the newspaper press became aware that the system upon which the new journalist meant to conduct his paper was the astute denial of all inconvenient truth, the exciting of religious antipathies by any and every means possible for his own purposes, and the throwing overboard of one set of allies as soon as another and a more profitable set were to be found. When some time afterwards, I was myself editing the Daily Colonist, it was a regular part of my duty to explore, year by year, the fables in the shape of history that were unblushingly woven into the Globe's annual summary of "Current Events".

Mr. Peter Brown was much better liked. I did him a small service on one occasion, which he did not forget, and we often met in friendly gossip. One day, I was pointing out to him some misstatement in that morning's Globe. He replied, with his customary shy twinkle of the eyelid, "Ou aye, Geordie's vara economical o' the truth!"

#### Insobriety in High Places

To write a faithful record of the history of either England or Canada during this century without alluding to the widespread habit among public men of indulging in champagne and still more intoxicating liquors to excess would be simply an impossibility. In Canada, in the early days, whiskey ruled supreme. How many young men of amiable dispositions and good abilities have I seen sent to the grave from the effects of strong drink in early life, utterly lost to all sense of religion or morality, and deserted by even their dissolute companions. In the years 1853 to 1860, when the Victoria Bridge and the Grand Trunk Railway were under construction, great numbers of English railway men were brought out - fine handsome fellows generally, but given much to strong beer in excess. Speaking on the subject to one of the section men on the road, he said that so much was the case, that scarcely an employee of the company was free from habits of intoxication, which was the cause of frequent railway accidents.

Mixing as I was compelled to do, with judges, ministers of the crown and public men of all sorts, I could not fail to be aware of what was taking place. County members of the legislature - men of good principles and highly respected in their own localities - were carried away in the vortex. The refreshment rooms of the Houses in Toronto and Quebec too often witnessed disgraceful scenes of excess and even of obscenity, and few who frequented them escaped the contagion. Lobbying hangers-on from all parts of the two Provinces plied the members perpetually with champagne or brandy. The Ministers of the Crown, to do them justice, kept their senses about them as carefully as they could.

The Globe newspaper has repeatedly accused the great leader of the Conservative party (John A. Macdonald) to yielding to such temptations. Easily affected by stimulants, he was sometimes laid up for weeks on a sickbed by a slight indulgence which would be without effect on a hard drinker. I was present at the St. Lawrence Hall in Montreal, during the Prince of Wales' stay there (1860), when addresses and deputations were arriving in a perfect avalanche. The Hon. Mr. Vankoughnet - who, with all the Ministers was in full Windsor uniform - said to me, "What an extraordinary head Macdonald has! When he can hardly walk straight he will sit down and write a reply to an address better than any other man can begin to do it."

Since Sir John's second marriage, in 1867, it is well known that Lady Macdonald has been his guardian angel, and that she has been a shield to him against the parasites who would fain still ply him with unwholesome stimulants. It is not denied, even by his enemies, that Sir John has always been free from personal greed. He once said to me, "I care nothing for money, but I do care for power, and for the ability to carry out measures which I think right."

#### The Prince of Wales in Canada

On the 25th of August, 1860, an excited crowd of citizens of all classes and creeds was assembled on the elevated plateau of Durham (Dufferin) Terrace (Quebec City) anxiously watching for the approach of the fleet which formed the convoy of (Edward) H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, on his visit to Canada. A better post for seeing, and a finer expanse for exhibiting a great marine spectacle, than Quebec affords, can scarcely be imagined. An unbroken sheet of water, two miles broad by eight long stretches within view of the spectator at one glance, and on this occasion it lay in brilliant sunshine, with numerous small craft flitting across in all directions, while a royal fleet of men-of-war hove into view, advancing slowly and stately, decked as were all the numerous vessels in harbour with flags of all nations, among which the stars and stripes gleamed conspicuously.

To describe the festivities, the addresses and replies, and the handsome provisions for the Prince's comfort within doors, is no part of my intention, but I may spare some space for the illuminations and fireworks for which the city seems specially adapted. The night was as fine as had been the day, and intensely dark, except for the brightness of the stars. Quebec, seen from Point Levis opposite, was one mount of fire. Terrace upon terrace, street above street, six or seven deep, glowed with lighted tapers, scarcely enough dark spots being noticeable to produce the effect of contrast. The French Canadians vied with their English-speaking neighbours in expressions of welcome, and well they might, for truly the sway of Queen Victoria has brought nothing but good to Lower Canada.

It was my fortune to follow the Prince almost throughout his tour as far as Toronto. At Montreal, the festivities were literally dampened by heavy rain. Thence I accompanied the royal party to Ste. Hyacinthe, and witnessed the reception by robed and mitred bishops and clergy in the college hall; thence to Sherbrooke and the great mills on the St. Francis River, where the process of drawing five or six logs from the water, and sawing them up at one movement by gangs of saws, greatly interested the Prince as well as the less important spectators. And, finally, at Toronto.

And the conclusion I came to was, that if there was a single, modest, gentle, unassuming individual in all the crowded scenes, that individual was the heir to the throne of Great Britain and Ireland, with all the colonies and dominions - himself.

#### The Northern Railway

On the 15th October, 1851, the friends of railway progress had the pleasure of witnessing the turning of the first sod of the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron - now the Northern Railway - by the Countess of Elgin, assisted by His Excellency the Governor General, in the presence, it may be said, of all Toronto - ministers of state, professors of the University and Upper Canada College, and a crowd of other dignitaries and citizens. The mysterious nature of the ceremony to the untutored masses, the brilliant prospects of commerce to the mercantile class, the perfect novelty of the occasion to all, made it perhaps the liveliest event which Toronto has experienced.

The real hero of the day was Frederic Chase Capreol - a man with a temperament so enthusiastic as to expose him to the charge of eccentricity, but who has lived to see his brightest visions respecting this road more than realized, although the rewards of his energy has, as is not unusual, gone to other men.

The population of Toronto was then 27,000 but has since (1884) grown to over 100,000, including the suburbs. The railroad was opened for traffic on the 16th May, 1853. The second locomotive engine was built in Toronto by James Good, Queen Street East and was moved on temporary tracks down Yonge Street escorted by a crowd of delighted citizens big and little, amid the exhilarating strains of a band of music.

#### The Canada Pacific Railway

I have mentioned that a surveyor named Lynn had, so long ago as 1834, published a chart of a transcontinental railway through Canada and the North West, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In 1851, the subject was introduced into our Canadian legislature by the Hon. P.B. de Alaquière, who moved a series of resolutions on the subject in the Legislative Council. The same year appeared in the Patriot newspaper an advertisement signed by Allan McDonell, brother of the late Bishop MacDonell, giving notice of application to the Legislature for a charter for the construction of a railway from the headwaters of Lake Superior to the Pacific Ocean. Also included was a letter from the same gentleman from which I quote the following:

"Liverpool to St.Lawrence (miles)	-2600
St.Lawrence to British Boundary on Lake Superior	- 900
Lake Superior to Fuca Straits	<u>-1500 (?)</u>
Total	5000 (?)

"The distance from Fuca's Straits to Japan is about 4000 miles, to Shanghai about 5000. Vancouver Island commands the Straits, and abounds in excellent harbours. Coal of a superior quality is found there; the Indians mine it, and deliver it on board the Hudson's Bay steamers at a mere nominal charge. No

port on the Pacific Coast affords such capabilities as does this for controlling the whole trade and traffic of the Pacific."

After 1857 the practicability of a Canadian Pacific Railway was generally discussed, and later Professor H.Y. Hind was appointed by the Canadian Government to make a formal exploration of the entire North-West, which he did very ably. A favourite idea of his was to utilize the valley of the Qu'appelle River as a connecting link between the Assiniboine near Winnipeg and the South Saskatchewan at the Elbow. He contended that this was the true and ancient course of the latter stream.

I have long been of the opinion that if ever Canada is to occupy anything more than a subordinate position among peoples, it will be by the construction of a railway across the continent; and that no sacrifice, however great, should be spared to this end.

#### Europe Revisited

In the year 1870, when the Beaver Insurance Company was well established and had enjoyed a series of favourable years, I sought and obtained permission to recruit my health, then much shaken by the loss of my wife and children, by a holiday spent in my native land and on the continent. A rapid voyage across the Atlantic to Liverpool, and a still more rapid journey by rail to London, placed me in the middle of the scenes which I had left thirty-seven years before. I found that all those years marked by revolutions, conquest and progress elsewhere, had passed over the familiar spots of my childhood almost without a symptom of change. The same brick streets, the same old church towers, the very same stones in the foot pavement, the same signs over shop windows, the same dirty Covent Garden Market, the same parks and promenades. But alas! not the same old faces - not the same kindly welcome. The fathers and mothers were dead - their children had become sires and matrons, with their children grown up, and owning families and business associations of their own.

After a month spent with relatives and friends, I decided on a visit to the mineral springs and baths of Kissingen in Bavaria, a small town where I spent three weeks recuperating my health. The thing that surprised me most was that military spirit and the love of domination seemed to have taken entire possession of the whole German people. They talk familiarly of the absorption of Luxembourg, Holland and Belgium, as originally German peoples, and even claim England on the like ground. Familiar conversation went like this: "You English are good sailors, but no soldiers. England will be ours someday, and that before long."

Leaving Kissingen, returning by the Rhine, and through Holland to Amsterdam I was much struck and pleased with the intellectual, manly courteous tone of Dutch society. Less brusque than the Germans, less studiously polite than the Frenchmen, the Low Dutchman seems to respect himself and others equally. I fancied that the old warlike, independent spirit was passing away, and that a fear of absorption by some grasping neighbour was taking place. Perhaps Holland, Belgium, France and England may yet be allied in resistance to German aggression.

Back to England, and again across the Atlantic to Quebec, and so home to Toronto, well satisfied with its solid comforts and its exemption from violent changes political and climatic. At Quebec (in 1874) the

first news I heard was, that the lovely frontier country I had just passed over between Paris and Strasbourg, was swarming with hostile armies, French and German, and that where I had seen only peace and contentment, was war, bloodshed, ruin and desolation.

The Future of Canada  
(As Seen in 1884)

Every mail brings tidings of new and astonishing strides made in the exploration and development of the Canadian North-West. The Prairie villages of last spring are transformed, as by an enchanted wand, into towns, by the swift advance of population into the erstwhile silent wilds. Fort Garry of two or three years back has become the City of Winnipeg, with its ten thousand souls. The surveyor's footmarks are effaced by the construction of the railway tracks (C.P.R.) at the rate of a mile and a half per day. Men who left Toronto a few months since, with little or no means, are already returning eastward with thousands of dollars in the shape of bank drafts which represent the gains on purchase and resale of prairie farms or town lots. No past experience of Western growth, even in the gold begotten San Francisco or railway-made Chicago, has prepared us for the rapid changes such as those going on before our eyes in the wilderness of Manitoba, in the very centre of the broadest part of the great continent of North America, and a thousand miles from either the Atlantic or the Pacific Oceans. It was the Marquis of Lorne who lately styled Winnipeg the heart-city of Canada, and the phrase seems to have been very happily chosen.

The grain growing lands of the Canadian Northwest, it is now known, are the most prolific and extensive in the world. Her copper, her silver, her iron, her coal mines, yield to none in productive capacity. The lakes and rivers are unsurpassed in extent and value. She has timber, shipping, railroads and men equal to any demand that can reasonably be anticipated.

The broad outlines of the Canadian entity include a boundless territory, a brave and hardy population spread along a frontier of 2500 miles, but possessing within itself all the elements of healthy moral and material progress. Every new rail line, be it remembered, gives a promise of vast supplies of food and of luxuries in exchange for that food. The most recent, and what to us (and to Great Britain) may prove the most momentous is a rail line planned to connect the City of Winnipeg with the waters of Hudson's Bay at Fort Churchill. The estimated five months season of navigation is only one month shorter than that of the St. Lawrence River. A line drawn from the north of Ireland to say Japan deflects very little from the shortest air-line between the two extremes. Whether the St. Lawrence or the Hudson Bay route will ultimately prove the more economical we are not now concerned to discuss. But it requires no seer to foretell that in case of hostile interference with the St. Lawrence Route, Britain's interests will be best subserved by the most northerly route, as will also those of Manitoba and all places west thereof. The inevitable conclusion from all this seems to be that Great Britain and the Canadian Northwest must continue to be inseparably united.

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