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A Journey to Canada.

BY JANE TRITTON GURNEY (*née* WHEATLEY).

ON board *The Parisian!* We watch our friends going down the steep gangway into the little tender below. All is confusion, partings are going on all around us—some sad, some full of hope for the future. Ours is not altogether sad, as my husband and I are starting for our new home in the north-west, and hope to see a good deal of Canada on the way. The voyage was splendid—the sea being sometimes as smooth as a lake, and the reflections on the water from the brilliant sunsets most beautiful. We saw off the banks of Newfoundland several grand icebergs glittering in the sun. Only about one-third of these huge masses of ice usually appears above the surface of the water, so that they are dangerous opponents for a ship to run against. When we neared the mouth of the St. Lawrence we suddenly found ourselves in the middle of a field of ice. There we remained twelve hours, and then had to back out slowly, and make our way round by another channel. The river is so wide here that you cannot see any land. One of the grandest sights is to watch the sun rise over the St. Lawrence, shedding a blaze of glory over this magnificent river.

We reached Quebec on Sunday, after a voyage of only ten days. The fact of a thousand emigrants landing with all their luggage on a strange shore caused no small confusion, and it was refreshing after all this bustle to attend the afternoon service at the English church, and join in the old familiar prayers and chants.

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Quebec is built on a hill. Princess Louise's sketches give a very good representation of it, and the two finest views are from the hill and the Governor's house.

It is difficult to believe that Quebec is part of an English colony, as it is quite a French settlement, and you hear very little English spoken.

We hired a *charette*—a peculiar little two-wheeled carriage with leather springs—to visit the Montmorenci Falls. We passed through an Indian village, where some of the ferocious Indian tribes are now living peaceably together, gaining a livelihood by working at feather and straw work, specimens of which were shewn at the Colonial Exhibition. The Montmorenci Falls are very beautiful—surpassing Niagara in height.

There is a splendid line of steamers running from Quebec to Montreal; they are like floating palaces with handsomely furnished saloons in the middle, and two tiers of bedrooms round. This is by far the pleasantest way of travelling, and strongly to be recommended to any invalid or over-worked clergymen. The sensation of gliding noiselessly through the calm waters is most charming. The banks are very picturesque, and interspersed with cottages, but these settlements looked very new and regular compared with our English thatched cottages with their rich colouring.

We reached Montreal after a twelve hours' journey. This is a very handsome city; the French and English population live happily side by side. The Roman catholics own a great deal of property, and there is a large convent outside the city precincts. Every visitor to Montreal should make a point of ascending the mountain. The view over the city and the St. Lawrence, and the tubular Victoria Bridge, are quite unique.

The next day we went a few miles up the river by train, and got on board the boat which was to "shoot the Rapids."

An Indian pilot, in full native costume, comes on board, to steer us through the most dangerous parts. The water shoots in a narrow stream through enormous rocks, which are barely covered by the water, and at

times it seems as if the prow of the boat must be dashed against these rocks. It is curious to notice the different levels of water, there being a marked rise and fall even within a few yards. It is very exciting work, dashing in the little steamer through the whirlpools and foaming mass of water, and you feel thankful when you have passed safely through it.

We paid a flying visit to Ottowa—the political capital of Canada. The Houses of Parliament are very fine buildings, and the town is beautifully situated on a hill overlooking the Ottowa river. This is also the great centre for timber exportation. The wood is stacked on large rafts, and floated down the river. From here we took the train back to the St. Lawrence, where we went on board the boat which was to pass through "The Thousand Islands," and bring us to a scene of unparalleled beauty. The river is here literally dotted over with a thousand islands of various sizes and shapes. One after the other rises up out of the water as we glide down the winding river: some are rocky, with only a few pine trees on them, while others have picturesque châlets. Many of these islets have been bought by private individuals, who spend some months of the summer on them, leading a picnic life, and depending on the daily steamer for provisions.

Toronto was our next halting place. This was reached by Lake Ontario, on which lake the city is built. It is the great centre for manufactures and produce of all kinds. In 1885 it celebrated its semi-centenary; and in the procession that was formed on the day of jubilee, art, education, manufacture, and natural products were variously represented; and one could not help being struck with the fact that England possesses in Canada a colony of which she may well be proud.

Toronto has two universities—one, Trinity College, which is a Church of England university; the fees are extremely low, and the teaching is given by English professors of high standing. The other is the public university of the province, and has an average

attendance of six hundred. There is also near Toronto a very good military college, from which several cadets are annually drafted into the British army.

From Toronto my husband took temporary charge of a large parish in Algoma. Algoma is a missionary diocese, with a thousand miles of coast-line on Lake Superior, and many hundred square miles of forest lying eastward from the lake. We started to our parish by railway, then took the steamer across Lake Rosseau, and lastly had twenty miles of forest country to drive through. We were packed in a wagon without springs; and just as we were starting, a friend, seeing that I had placed my arm on the side of the wagon, said, "You must keep your arm well within the edge of the wagon, or your ribs will be broken"; and certainly this was no unnecessary precaution. It took us ten hours to accomplish the twenty miles of road. We were shaken up and down, and from side to side, like peas in a child's rattle; the horses sometimes climbed rocks as high as a table, and then slid down the other side; we had to spring out of the wagon when called to do so by the driver.

We reached the little log vicarage, with its adjacent log church, at sunset. The view from the house was over miles and miles of forest, lit up by the sunset glow. Only here and there could a break be seen, from which the blue smoke betokened some settler's home.

It was intensely interesting to go among the two hundred settlers of this backwoods parish of two hundred and fifty square miles, and see with what eagerness any services in church or gifts of books were welcomed. I well remember one rough farmer, who had emigrated to the bush, telling me that for seven years he had had no church to go to, and then, when a service was started, and the grand old *Te Deum* was sung, it was too much for him, and he quite broke down. We in England can hardly realise what the Church's services are to these lonely settlers in the backwoods of America. They will walk many miles over rough roads, through swamps and deep mud and thick forests, to attend divine

service in the little log church, on which many of them have bestowed much personal labour.

Many of the settlers come out with very little money, and they have to undergo great hardships in making for themselves a home in the trackless forest. Each tree has to be cut down, chopped into lengths, and burnt; and then it is perhaps years before the root remaining in the ground can be extracted, to allow the free use of the plough.

My husband's duties on Sundays were of a very varied description. He began by milking two cows. At eight o'clock he started for the first mission station, six miles off, called Hoodstown. First a lake had to be crossed; then several miles of bush—some of which consisted of smouldering logs, which had to be climbed over; then another lake was reached, across which he had to paddle his own canoe for a distance of seven miles. These canoes need the greatest care. My husband made me a bed of ferns in the stern, and told me not to move an inch if I wished to get safely to the other side.

He reached the little mission church at half-past ten, and had a hearty service, the people starting the chants themselves, as there was no harmonium. These settlers had built the church themselves, and were in consequence very proud of it. The service over, he retraced his steps; dinner at half-past two, and at three o'clock, service at what might be called the mother church, to which settlers came from many miles round.

The next station to be reached for evening service was ten miles off, near Round Lake.

After crossing our own lake we landed on the left bank, and followed an Indian trail through the bush. It is very difficult otherwise to find your way through the tangled brushwood, and if you once lose the track you are almost sure to go round and round in a circle. The Indians "blaze" a path by cutting with an axe the barks of the large trees, and by bending the tops of smaller bushes. Occasionally you meet with their deserted wigwams in some very lonely spot; and in

the autumn they go about selling skins and basket and birch-bark work.

It came on to pour with rain when we were half way across the bush, and pushing through the thick wet underwood, by no means improved the appearance of my cotton dress. On nearing the shore of Round Lake, E—— called out, and received a shout in return from the dear old man Smith, at whose house we were to stop for the night, and who had come to paddle us in his canoe across the lake. At last we reached the log hut, and made friends with old Mrs. Smith, who was a picture of neatness, with her closely-fitting snow-white cap and plain dress. She proved a most kind hostess, and soon dried our wet clothes, lending me a dress of her own. This old couple had lived for many years in this lonely backwoods hut, and it was delightful to meet with such refined minds, and to see by their lives that they had lived in close communion with Nature's God, though they had had no church to go to. The missionary, whose work my husband took for a time, held a service in their cottage once a fortnight. Everything was spotlessly clean, and the whole house consisted of a kitchen and one long room, made out of the rough logs.

I shall long remember that evening service, the happy faces of that old couple, their wrapt attention, and the heartiness of their responses. Another old couple had walked far through swamps and over felled trees to attend this little cottage-service, and had to return the same way through darkness and rain. After a delicious supper of milk and bread and butter and cake we were glad to go to rest. The next day Smith talked over a long-cherished plan of his to build a small mission-church on his own land.

On our journey home we fell in with a hunting-party, who were just towing a deer to land. They kindly presented us with a haunch of venison—a gift much to be prized when you can get meat only once a week; it was no easy task, however, to carry it safely through the swamps and over the stumps.

I must not omit to mention another little mission-

station, called Ravenscliff, which consisted of a little colony of settlers from England, and was hidden away in the depths of the forest. One family in particular determined to build a church as soon as the ground could be cleared and the timber prepared. But the father was stricken down, and died before his wish could be carried out, and on his dying-bed he bade his sons set to work as soon as they could; and now a lovely little church stands on the spot where the old man was buried. This large diocese of Algoma is presided over by one of Canada's most zealous bishops, and he goes through many perils and hardships in his long journeys. The Indians form a most interesting part of the work, and at Sault St. Marie, at the entrance to Lake Superior, a very successful home for Indian boys has been opened, where they are taught all kinds of handiwork and trades, and are civilised in every way. The English clergyman at the head of the home devotes his whole life to it. These Indian boys are kept only six months in the year in the home, as the change from their roving out-door life is very trying to them, and they often go into a decline, and die. There is an interesting story told of a tribe of Indians who had heard an account from one of their tribe of a man who had preached about the unknown God. They longed to know more; but years passed on, and they went on worshipping the "Great Maniton," and trusting to all kinds of superstitions. After thirty years of waiting the first missionary bishop of Algoma (Bishop Fauquier), in travelling through this part of his diocese, heard of this settlement of Indians, and great was his surprise on arriving to find himself most warmly welcomed by these rude Indians. They were eager to learn what he could tell them of the unknown God. A resident missionary was appointed, and these three thousand Red Indians are now all Christians and loyal subjects of the Queen.

I must now pass on to our visit to Manitoba, the vast prairie country, with its inexhaustible farming resources. It forms a great contrast to the backwoods, where the soil is rocky and poor.

We crossed Lake Superior in a steamer, and realised the size of this inland lake when we were told that the whole of England could be swallowed up in it. We were five days on the water, and on reaching Deluth took tickets by the famous Canadian Pacific Railway.

Six years ago Winnipeg was only a hamlet consisting of a few scattered houses, but was conveniently situated between the two rivers—the Assiniboine and the Red River; and hence, when the line reached this point, it grew to be the centre for the north-west traffic.

Thousands of emigrants streamed in in 1884—every train was laden with them, and prices went up enormously. Tents were erected round the town, and wooden booths hastily run up to meet the demand for house accommodation. As might be expected under these circumstances, typhoid-fever broke out after the hot summer months, and the hospital was crowded with patients. There were sad cases of young Englishmen, who had come out from comfortable homes, dying friendless in a strange land.

Wages were very high, and servants at a premium—waitresses in hotels getting as much as £96 a year and their board. I had to pay a laundress four shillings a dozen for clothes. Food was proportionately dear, and every drop of water had to be bought. We paid thirty-five dollars per month for a tiny unfurnished cottage, which stood in a foot of black slippery mud.

The Hudson's Bay Company have large stores of fur here. Buffalo "robes" are becoming rare and expensive, for the buffaloes are driven further and further off as the white man advances.

After a stay of six weeks in Winnipeg we were glad to get out on the prairie, with its beautiful flora and clear air and lovely northern lights. My husband's "homestead" was one hundred and forty miles from Winnipeg, and consisted of one hundred and sixty acres. The Government offer a free grant of land, or "homestead," to settlers, on condition that they put up a house, fence and cultivate a certain portion of the land, reside on it for three years (or one year without absence), and pay the regulation fee of two pounds for entry.

Our house consisted of a verandah, a kitchen, and a bedroom above the kitchen. There was no bed to sleep on, and until E—— manufactured one of rough boards we had to sleep on our buffalo-robes. We had, of course, to do everything for ourselves, but E—— was well accustomed to this, and could bake and cook. He had built the house himself, bringing the timber one hundred and forty miles across the prairie, with the glass 40° below zero.

We were miles from any "stores," and had in great measure to depend for food on the prairie chickens and wild ducks, which abounded. The wild ducks were very shy, and E—— had to crawl stealthily through the high grass, followed by his faithful dog Carlo. On one occasion he brought home fourteen ducks and prairie chickens, which made soup worthy of any London dinner-party.

We looked out upon miles of prairie, with scarcely a house in view. I remember one day counting five prairie fires that were raging around us. These huge fires, which sweep for hundreds of miles over the vast plain, are very frequent in the autumn, when the grass is dry. They are sometimes started by the lighting of a pipe, or some trivial carelessness on the part of a settler. The only safeguard against these fires is to plough a broad belt round the homestead.

The soil is wonderfully productive, yielding in some parts fifty bushels to the acre; but owing to the expense of carriage, and the great distance the wheat has to be conveyed, farming does not pay as well as might be expected—in fact wheat is a drug in the market, and the supply greater than the demand.

The Indians in this part of Manitoba belong to the Sioux tribe, and are very clever. The men are of small stature, but wiry; they look very picturesque in their native dress of embroidered leather, with bright-coloured bead ornaments. The women wear a sort of blanket dress, fastened round the waist with a girdle. They carry their babies on their back in a kind of upright wooden crib, which is suspended from their shoulders.

These Indians lived very peaceably side by side with the white men, and at that time we never dreamt of an Indian rebellion. They are a very impassive race. An Indian would sometimes walk into the cottage, without knocking, sit down, and say "Indian hungry!" or "Indian thirsty!" and then, on being satisfied, walk out without saying another word. One Indian on being reprimanded for being lazy at his work quietly said, "Indian born tired!"

The climate of Manitoba is very healthy, but intensely cold in winter and hot in summer. The winter lasts about six months, and the glass sometimes sinks to 50° below zero.

When a "blizzard" sweeps over the prairie, any unfortunate traveller is in great danger of losing his life. These tremendous snow-storms, which sometimes last thirty-six hours, are ushered in by a sound which resembles a gun going off, and are generally preceded by the appearance of mock suns in the sky; and the only hope of escape is to take shelter in the nearest cottage.

In the summer the mosquitoes are very troublesome, and our little prairie pony used to come to the house door and make us understand it wanted a "mosquito smudge" lit (this is the Canadian name for a bonfire). The farm-house animals gather round these "smudges," preferring the smoke to the bites of the mosquitoes.

There is something very grand in the stillness and vastness of the prairie. An infinite variety of bright flowers, tall waving grasses, low copses, small lakes of deepest blue, make a charming variety in the landscape; and it is very enjoyable driving for miles over the grass in a "buck-board" (a rough four-wheeled cart) with a fast-trotting Indian pony. Occasionally we made our way through bushes and logs and ploughed fields as deliberately as if it were the best English road—for a settler has often to make a road for himself.

I have said nothing in these rough notes of the character of the people of Canada, but this is almost impossible in a country that is made up of emigrants

and settlers of different nationalities. All the separate national characters and characteristics are lost, however, in the one great fact that Canada is a part of the British empire. In the words of Mr. Froude, "The Colonies are a part of ourselves; they are British subjects; they honour and love their Sovereign, though they never look upon her presence . . . and they are proud of belonging to a nation on whose flag the sun never sets."