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Three Years in Canada, Vol. II by John MacTaggart , published 1829

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ABOUT THIS BOOK:

This is an early and rare book describing Canada in the form of a report, to the British Government, of its development and the opportunities it offers. While this is the second of two volumes comprising the whole book it stands in it's own right without any loss of information or intelligence.

The book is owned by a good friend of the Archive CD Books project, Karen Prytula. Karen has asked us to dedicate this CD edition of her book to: "Great Aunt Dolly and Great Uncle Harry Rush for helping me so much in researching our family history." and we are pleased to do so.

THREE YEARS IN CANADA :

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

ACTUAL STATE OF THE COUNTRY

IN 1826-7-8.

COMPREHENDING

ITS RESOURCES, PRODUCTIONS,

IMPROVEMENTS, AND CAPABILITIES;

AND INCLUDING

SKETCHES OF THE STATE OF SOCIETY,

ADVICE TO EMIGRANTS, &c.

BY JOHN MACTAGGART,

CIVIL ENGINEER, IN THE SERVICE OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON :

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1829.

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THREE YEARS IN CANADA.

THE WEATHER.

THE extremes of heat and cold are felt to be more severe in the cleared districts than in the uncleared; mercury frequently freezes at Quebec and Montreal, and the summers are so hot for some days, that it is a wonder how animals contrive to live. Rain is not very abundant; it prevails most in the spring and fall. Mists in the inland country are not so frequent as in Britain, but on the sea-coast much more so. Thunder and lightning are very common; the flashes more vivid and bright, and the peals much louder. Hail is not very common; and the *piles* of snow are very regular figures, hexagonal and sometimes octagonal *stars*: the snow never falls in

MINES OF CANADA.

CANADA is rich in mines. Iron seems to abound in great quantities, and of an excellent quality. Silver ore is found by the Bay of Quinty, Upper Canada: I have beautiful specimens of it. Dr. Dunlop analyzed it, and considered it good. There is also much of it brought from the *Rocky Mountains* by the Indians. About Hawkesbury, 60 miles above Montreal, there are immense quantities of plumbago; this seems much more valuable than that in the market from *Borrowdale*, in Cumberland. Indeed, all up the Grand River, or Ottawa, plumbago largely prevails. Some symptoms of copper I have seen in various parts of the country. On the banks of the River Gattineau much lead and tin abound; beautiful specimens are brought down by the Indians. My enterprising friend, Mr. Tiberius

ture, after the same manner as the Lakes of America.

Steam-Boats.

A steam-boat, if properly constructed, will live in as heavy a sea as a sailed ship, and perhaps where the latter would founder. Could the machinery be simplified, they would answer to navigate the ocean with in any part before the others; and this certainly may be simplified much. Instead of adding wheels and cranks, contrive to do away with them, and the thing will be effected. I measured the dimensions of two steam-boats on the St. Lawrence, which run between Quebec and Montreal: the first, or *Lady Sherbrook*, was 145 feet from stem to stern, the *Chamby*, 142; in width, from out to out of the paddle-wheels they were equal, which width was 50 feet: the former drew 10 feet water when laden, the latter 6.

A steam-boat, properly managed, with a good and powerful engine, will stem the rapid of a large river, if it be no more than three feet fall in the mile. I have frequently gone from Montreal up the River St. Lawrence to the village of Laprairie in an active little steam-boat: this is a rapid of about 15 feet in three miles. The boat

for, although this may be done by more able observers, and dispel superstition, in a measure, from the very superstitious sailor. Probably those mirrors formed by clouds of thin white vapour, as seen by travellers amongst the Hartz Mountains of Germany, may proceed from the same cause.

Corduroy Roads and Bridges.

In too many places in Canada the roads are carried over broad swamps and wide gullies, on round logs of wood, or rather trees, averaging a foot diameter, each laid close by one another's side, and no attempt made to fill up the spaces between them. These turnpikes are fancied to resemble that famous King's cloth, called *Corduroy*—hence their name. When Dante wrote his celebrated poem the “*Inferno*,” the critics blamed his muse for not selecting a proper highway to Pandemonium; but had she been aware of the nature of the *Corduroy* species, there is no doubt but that would have been chosen, as certainly none can be more decidedly infernal. In passing over them in a lumbering waggon, the poor human frame is jolted to pieces. But out of evil there always comes good; for were the country people to take too much care of their roads, so that passengers would have no reason to complain of them, then

THE INDIANS

BEFORE leaving England, I was often told to take care of myself, as the natives of the wilds would be apt to scalp me. However, from what I had learned from the books of travellers, I thought there was little to dread in this respect; and so it was found. They are a very harmless people, so far as my experience amongst them goes. When at any time intoxicated with spirituous liquors, they are rather dangerous, and not to be trifled with; at other times, an European may live and wander with them long enough, without fear of molestation. They are very kind, and will do every thing they conceive will oblige strangers. Those residing in the villages in the settled parts of Canada, embrace the Catholic form of religion, and have their churches and priests. When the bishop passes them, they will

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

THIS is a concern of very old standing, as most people know, having been chartered by Government in 1662. It trades chiefly, if not wholly, in fur, which, being gathered in the wild regions of Canada, is shipped at a place called *York Factory, Hudson's Bay*, and carried to London. On all the rivers which intersect those immense territories, the Company have established what are called their *Posts*. These are houses built for their clerks and *voyageurs* to stop in and purchase skins from the Indians. Such posts are generally built at *portages*, the better to intercept any canoes that may happen to pass up or down the rivers; these *portages* being carrying-places past rapids, or isthmuses between lakes; that is, places where *voyageurs*, who are people that manage

VALE OF GATTINEAU,

A PROPER PLACE FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF CONVICTS.

IT seems to me that it would be much to the benefit of Great Britain to transport a part of her convicts to this Vale of the Gattineau; they would here be quite apart from the rest of the inhabitants of the colony, and it would be perfectly impossible for them to escape. A tailor once took it into his head to run away from his master at Hull, and return to Quebec, the place of his nativity. He started early in the morning, took a canoe, crossed over the River Ottawa, and entered the wilderness on the opposite side. Day after day the poor fellow wandered in the woods, and found nothing to support life but a few wild raspberries. At last, on the tenth day of his desertion, he came out at the *Rapid de Chats*, about thirty miles from Hull, and quite in an opposite direction to that he intended to

BENEFITS TO CANADA.

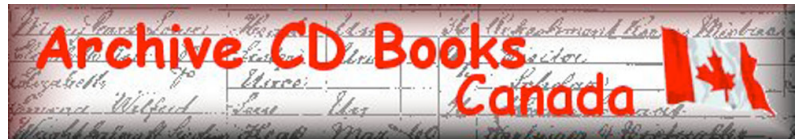
LET the French Canadians have their own way, and follow their own laws, religion, and customs. Our Legislature have seen this, and acted wisely towards them. They ought to be allowed the appointment of their own rulers, to impose their own taxation, and expend their own funds as they think most proper; wherever, as in Lower Canada, large colonies of them are found together, every privilege ought to be granted them, which would greatly encourage their exertions. Their *head men* and *top man* of all should be chosen from their own people. Settlers from Great Britain and Ireland, who are among them, would feel perfectly happy and secure in this arrangement.

Let nothing be brought from the United States into Canada, unless a very heavy duty be laid on

HALIFAX.

THIS town is the capital of Nova Scotia, situated on the South-west bank of a large peninsula or tongue of unfertile land stretching into a beautiful bay of the Atlantic Ocean, in north latitude $43^{\circ} 35'$, west longitude $64^{\circ} 23'$. It has many elegant structures of stone ;—the Province building cost 72,000*l.* the architecture of which is much admired. The streets are well Macadamized, and cross one another at right angles ; they run parallel to the line of shore, and directly up and down the face of the bank or hill, the summit of which is about 200 feet above the level of the bay. On this stands a fort, much decayed ; the gun-carriages, and platforms are quite rotten ; willow-bushes, overgrowing the bastions, have sprung out of the remains of the stockades.

The harbour is capacious and deep, and hence



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