

# The Englishwoman in America

Isabella Lucy Bird

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THE ENGLISHWOMAN IN AMERICA

BY  
ISABELLA LUCY BIRD

FOREWORD AND NOTES BY ANDREW HILL CLARK

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THE ENGLISHWOMAN IN AMERICA. [Footnote: It is necessary to state that this volume is not by the Authoress of the 'Englishwoman in Russia']

#### CHAPTER I.

Prefatory and explanatory--The voyage out--The sentimental--The actual--The oblivious--The medley--Practical joking--An unwelcome companion--American patriotism--The first view--The departure.

As a general dislike of prefaces is unmistakeably evidenced by their uncut leaves, and as unknown readers could scarcely be induced to read a book by the most cogent representations of an unknown author, and as apologies for "rushing into print" are too trite and insincere to have any effect, I will merely prefix a few explanatory remarks to my first chapter.

Circumstances which it is unnecessary to dwell upon led me across the Atlantic with some relatives; and on my return, I was requested by numerous friends to give an account of my travels. As this volume has been written with a view to their gratification, there is far more of personal narrative than is likely to interest the general reader.

With respect to the people of the United States, I have given those impressions which as a traveller I formed; if they are more favourable than those of some of my predecessors, the difference may arise from my having taken out many excellent introductions, which afforded me greater facilities of seeing the best society in the States than are usually possessed by those who travel merely to see the country.

Where I have offered any opinions upon the effect produced by the institutions of America, or upon any great national question, I have done so with extreme diffidence, giving impressions rather than

\_conclusions\_, feeling the great injustice of drawing general inferences from partial premises, as well as the impossibility of rightly estimating cause and effect during a brief residence in the United States. I have endeavoured to give a faithful picture of what I saw and heard, avoiding the beaten track as much as possible, and dwelling principally on those things in which I knew that my friends were most interested.

Previously to visiting the United States, I had read most of the American travels which had been published; yet from experience I can say that even those who read most on the Americans know little of them, from the disposition which leads travellers to seize and dwell upon the ludicrous points which continually present themselves.

We know that there is a vast continent across the Atlantic, first discovered by a Genoese sailing under the Spanish flag, and that for many years past it has swallowed up thousands of the hardiest of our population. Although our feelings are not particularly fraternal, we give the people inhabiting this continent the national cognomen of "\_Brother Jonathan\_," while we name individuals "\_Yankees\_." We know that they are famous for smoking, spitting, "gouging," and bowie-knives--for monster hotels, steamboat explosions, railway collisions, and repudiated debts. It is believed also that this nation is renowned for keeping three millions of Africans in slavery--for wooden nutmegs, paper money, and "fillibuster" expeditions--for carrying out nationally and individually the maxim

"That they may take who have the power,  
And they may keep who can."

I went to the States with that amount of prejudice which seems the birthright of every English person, but I found that, under the knowledge of the Americans which can be attained by a traveller mixing in society in every grade, these prejudices gradually melted away. I found much which is worthy of commendation, even of imitation: that there is much which is very reprehensible, is not to be wondered at in a country which for years has been made a "cave of Adullam"--a refuge for those who have "left their country for their country's good"--a receptacle for the barbarous, the degraded, and the vicious of all other nations. It must never be forgotten that the noble, the learned, and the wealthy have shrunk from the United States; her broad lands have been peopled to a great extent by those whose stalwart arms have been their only possession.

Is it surprising, considering these antecedents, that much of arrogance, coarseness, and vulgarity should be met with? Is it not rather surprising, that a traveller should meet with so little to annoy--so few obvious departures from the rules of propriety?

An Englishman bears with patience any ridicule which foreigners cast upon him. John Bull never laughs so loudly as when he laughs at himself; but the Americans are nationally sensitive, and cannot endure that good-humoured raillery which jests at their weaknesses and foibles. Hence candid and even favourable statements of the \_truth\_ by English travellers are received with a perfect outcry by the Americans; and the phrases, "shameful misstatements," "violation of the rights of hospitality," &c., are on every lip.

Most assuredly that spirit of envious rivalry and depreciating criticism in which many English travellers have written, is greatly to be deprecated, no less than the tone of servile adulation which some writers have adopted; but our American neighbours must recollect that they

provoked both the virulent spirit and the hostile caricature by the way in which some of their most popular writers of travels have led an ungenerous onslaught against our institutions and people, and the bitter tone in which their newspaper press, headed by the Tribune, indulges towards the British nation.

Having made these few remarks, I must state that at the time of my visit to the States I had no intention of recording my "experiences" in print; and as my notes taken at the time were few and meagre, and have been elaborated from memory, some inaccuracies have occurred which it will not take a keen eye to detect. These must be set down to want of correct information rather than to wilful misrepresentation. The statistical information given is taken from works compiled by the Americans themselves. The few matters on which I write which did not come under my own observation, I learned from trustworthy persons who have been long resident in the country.

Of Canada it is scarcely necessary to speak here. Perhaps an English writer may be inclined to adopt too eulogistic a tone in speaking of that noble and loyal colony, in which British institutions are undergoing a Transatlantic trial, and where a free people is protected by British laws. There are, doubtless, some English readers who will be interested in the brief notices which I have given of its people, its society, and its astonishing capabilities. [Footnote: I must here record my grateful acknowledgments to a gentleman in a prominent public position in Canada, who has furnished me with much valuable information which I should not otherwise have obtained.]

The notes from which this volume is taken were written in the lands of which it treats: they have been amplified and corrected in the genial atmosphere of an English home. I will not offer hackneyed apologies for its very numerous faults and deficiencies; but will conclude these tedious but necessary introductory remarks with the sincere hope that my readers may receive one hundredth part of the pleasure from the perusal of this volume which I experienced among the scenes and people of which it is too imperfect a record.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although bi-weekly steamers ply between England and the States, and many mercantile men cross the Atlantic twice annually on business, and think nothing of it, the voyage seems an important event when undertaken for the first time. Friends living in inland counties, and those who have been sea-sick in crossing the straits of Dover, exaggerate the dangers and discomforts of ocean travelling, and shake their heads knowingly about fogs and icebergs.

Then there are a certain number of boxes to be packed, and a very uncertain number of things to fill them, while clothing has to be provided suitable to a tropical summer, and a winter within the arctic circle. But a variety of minor arrangements, and even an indefinite number of leave-takings, cannot be indefinitely prolonged; and at eight o'clock on a Saturday morning in 1854, I found myself with my friends on the landing-stage at Liverpool.

Whatever sentimental feelings one might be inclined to indulge in on leaving the shores of England were usefully and instantaneously annihilated by the discomfort and crush in the Satellite steam-tender, in which the passengers were conveyed, helplessly huddled together like a

flock of sheep, to the Canada, an 1850-ton paddle-wheel steamer of the Cunard line, which was moored in the centre of the Mersey.

An investigation into the state-rooms, and the recital of disappointed expectations consequent on the discovery of their very small dimensions, the rescue of "regulation" portmanteaus from sailors who were running off with them, and the indulgence of that errant curiosity which glances at everything and rests on nothing, occupied the time before the arrival of the mail-boat with about two tons of letters and newspapers, which were consigned to the mail-room with incredible rapidity.

Then friends were abruptly dismissed--two guns were fired--the lashings were cast off--the stars and stripes flaunted gaily from the fore--the captain and pilot took their places on the paddle-boxes--the bell rang--our huge paddle-wheels revolved, and, to use the words in which the same event was chronicled by the daily press, "The Cunard royal mail steamer Canada, Captain Stone, left the Mersey this morning for Boston and Halifax, conveying the usual mails; with one hundred and sixty-eight passengers, and a large cargo on freight."

It was an auspiciously commenced voyage as far as appearances went. The summer sun shone brightly--the waves of the Mersey were crisp and foam-capped--and the fields of England had never worn a brighter green. The fleet of merchant-ships through which we passed was not without an interest. There were timber-ships, huge and square-sided, unmistakably from Quebec or Miramichi--green high-sterned Dutch galliots--American ships with long black hulls and tall raking masts--and those far-famed "Black Ball" clippers, the Marco Polo and the Champion of the Seas,--in short, the ships of all nations, with their marked and distinguishing peculiarities. But the most interesting object of all was the screw troop-ship Himalaya, which was embarking the Scots Greys for the Crimea--that regiment which has since earned so glorious but fatal a celebrity on the bloody field of Balaklava.

It is to be supposed that to those who were crossing the Atlantic for the first time to the western hemisphere there was some degree of excitement, and that regret was among the feelings with which they saw the coast of England become a faint cloud on the horizon; but soon oblivion stole over the intellects of most of the passengers, leaving one absorbing feeling of disgust, first to the viands, next to those who could partake of them, and lastly to everything connected with the sea. Fortunately this state of things only lasted for two days, as the weather was very calm, and we ran with studding-sails set before a fair wind as far as the Nova Scotian coast.

The genius of Idleness presided over us all. There were five ample meals every day, and people ate, and walked till they could eat again; while some, extended on sofas, slept over odd volumes of novels from the ship's library, and others played at chess, cards, or backgammon from morning to night. Some of the more active spirits played "shuffle-boards," which kept the deck in an uproar; while others enjoyed the dolce far niente in their berths, except when the bell summoned to meals. There were weather-wise people, who smoked round the funnel all day, and prophesied foul winds every night; and pertinacious querists, who asked the captain every hour or two when we should reach Halifax. Some betted on the "run," and others on the time of reaching port; in short, every expedient was resorted to by which time could be killed.

We had about twenty English passengers; the rest were Canadians,

Americans, Jews, Germans, Dutch, French, Californians, Spaniards, and Bavarians. Strict equality was preserved in this heterogeneous assembly. An Irish pork-merchant was seated at dinner next a Jew, who regarded the pig in toto as an abomination--a lady, a scion of a ducal family, found herself next to a French cook going out to a San Franciscan eating-house--an officer, going out to high command at Halifax, was seated next a rough Californian, who wore "nuggets" of gold for buttons; and there were contrasts even stronger than these. The most conspicuous of our fellow-voyagers was the editor of an American paper, who was writing a series of clever but scurrilous articles on England, from materials gleaned in a three weeks' tour!

Some of the Americans were very fond of practical jokes, but these were rather of a stupid description. There was a Spanish gentleman who used to promenade the deck with a dignity worthy of the Cid Rodrigo, addressing everybody he met with the question, "Parlez-vous Francais, Monsieur?" and at the end of the voyage his stock of English only amounted to "Dice? Sixpence." One day at dinner this gentleman requested a French-speaking Californian to tell him how to ask for du pain in English. "My donkeys," was the prompt reply, and the joke was winked down the table, while the Spaniard was hammering away at "My donkeys" till he got the pronunciation perfect. The waiter came round, and the unhappy man, in confident but mellifluous tones, pointing to the bread, asked for "My donkeys."

Comic drinking-songs, and satires on the English, the latter to the tune of 'Yankee Doodle,' were sung in the saloon in the evenings round large bowls of punch, and had the effect of keeping many of the ladies on deck, when a refuge from the cold and spray would have been desirable; but with this exception the conduct of the passengers on the whole was marked by far more propriety than could have been expected from so mixed a company. If the captain had been more of a disciplinarian, even this annoyance might have been avoided.

I had the misfortune of having for my companion in my state-room an Englishwoman who had resided for some years at New York, and who combined in herself the disagreeable qualities of both nations. She was in a frequent state of intoxication, and kept gin, brandy, and beer in her berth. Whether sober or not, she was equally voluble; and as her language was not only inelegant, but replete with coarseness and profanity, the annoyance was almost insupportable. She was a professed atheist, and as such justly an object of commiseration, the weakness of her unbelief being clearly manifested by the frequency with which she denied the existence of a God.

On one day, as I was reading my Bible, she exclaimed with a profane expression, "I wish you'd pitch that book overboard, it's enough to sink the ship;" the contradiction implied in the words showing the weakness of her atheism, which, while it promises a man the impunity of non-existence, and degrades him to desire it, very frequently seduces him to live as an infidel, but to die a terrified and despairing believer.

It was a very uneventful voyage. The foul winds prophesied never blew, the icebergs kept far away to the northward, the excitement of flight from

Russian privateers was exchanged for the sight of one harmless merchantman; even the fogs off Newfoundland turned out complete myths.

On the seventh day out the bets on the hour of our arrival at Halifax increased in number and magnitude, and a lottery was started; on the

eighth we passed Cape Race, and spoke the steamer *Asia*; our rigging was tightened, and our railings polished; and in nine days and five hours from Liverpool we landed on the shores of the New World. The day previous to our landing was a Sunday, and I was pleased to observe the decorum which pervaded the ship. Service was conducted with propriety in the morning; a large proportion of the passengers read their Bibles or other religious books; punch, chess, and cards were banished from the saloon; and though we had almost as many creeds as nationalities, and some had no creed at all, yet those who might ridicule the observance of the Sabbath themselves, avoided any proceedings calculated to shock what they might term the prejudices of others.

On the next day we had a slight head wind for the first time; most of the passengers were sea-sick, and those who were not so were promenading the wet, sooty deck in the rain, in a uniform of oilskin coats and caps. The sea and sky were both of a leaden colour; and as there was nothing to enliven the prospect but the gambols of some very uncouth-looking porpoises, I was lying half asleep on a settee, when I was roused by the voice of a kind-hearted Yankee skipper, saying, "Come, get up; there's a glorious country and no mistake; a great country, a progressive country, the greatest country under the sun." The honest sailor was rubbing his hands with delight as he spoke, his broad, open countenance beaming with a perfect glow of satisfaction. I looked in the direction indicated by his finger, and beheld, not the lofty pinnacled cliffs of the "Pilgrim Fathers," but a low gloomy coast, looming through a mist.

I already began to appreciate the hearty enthusiasm with which Americans always speak of their country, designated as it is by us by the names "National vanity," and "Boastfulness." This *esprit du pays*, although it is sometimes carried to a ridiculous extent, is greatly to be preferred to the abusive manner in which an Englishman accustoms himself to speak of the glorious country to which he appears to feel it a disgrace to belong. It does one good to hear an American discourse on America, his panegyric generally concluding with the words, "We're the greatest people on the face of the earth."

At dusk, after steaming during the whole day along the low green coast of Nova Scotia, we were just outside the heads of Halifax harbour, and the setting sun was bathing the low, pine-clad hills of America in floods of purple light. A pilot came off to offer his services, but was rejected, and to my delight he hailed in a pure English accent, which sounded like a friendly welcome. The captain took his place on the paddle-box, and our speed was slackened. Two guns were fired, and their echoes rolled for many a mile among the low, purple hills, from which a soft, fragrant scent of pines was borne to us on the evening breeze, reminding me of the far-distant mountains of Scotland. The tiny waves rippled towards us like diamonds, the moon and stars shone brilliantly from a summer sky, and the white smoke from our guns floated away in silver clouds.

People were tumbling over each other in their haste, and making impossible demands, each one being anxious to have his luggage produced first, though the said luggage might be at the bottom of the hold; babies, as babies always do, persisted in crying just at the wrong time; articles essential to the toilet were missing, and sixpences or half-sovereigns had found their way into impossible crevices. Invitations were given, cards exchanged, elderly ladies unthinkingly promised to make errant expeditions to visit agreeable acquaintances in California, and by the time the last words had been spoken we were safely moored at Cunard's wharf.

The evening gun boomed from the citadel. I heard the well-known British bugle; I saw the familiar scarlet of our troops; the voices which vociferated were English; the physiognomies had the Anglo-Saxon cast and complexion; and on the shores of the western hemisphere I felt myself at home. Yet, as I sprang from the boat, and set my foot for the first time on American soil, I was vexed that these familiar sights and sounds should deprive me of the pleasurable feeling of excitement which I had expected to experience under such novel circumstances.

## CHAPTER II

An inhospitable reception--Halifax and the Blue Noses--The heat--Disappointed expectations--The great departed--What the Blue Noses might be--What the coach was not--Nova Scotia and its capabilities--The roads and their annoyances--A tea dinner--A night journey and a Highland cabin--A nautical catastrophe--A joyful reunion.

The Cunard steamers are powerful, punctual, and safe, their cuisine excellent, their arrangements admirable, till they reach Halifax, which is usually the destination of many of the passengers. I will suppose that the voyage has been propitious, and our guns have thundered forth the announcement that the news of the Old World has reached the New; that the stewards have been fee'd and the captain complimented; and that we have parted on the best possible terms with the Company, the ship, and our fellow-passengers. The steamer generally remains for two or three hours at Halifax to coal, and unship a portion of her cargo, and there is a very natural desire on the part of the passengers to leave what to many is at best a floating prison, and set foot on firm ground, even for an hour. Those who, like ourselves, land at Halifax for the interior, are anxious to obtain rooms at the hotel, and all who have nothing else to do hurry to the ice-shop, where the luxury of a tumbler of raspberry-cream ice can be obtained for threepence. Besides the hurried rush of those who with these varied objects in view leave the steamer, there are crowds of incomers in the shape of porters, visitors, and coalheavers, and passengers for the States, who prefer the comfort and known punctuality of the Royal Mail steamers to the delay, danger, and uncertainty of the intercolonial route, though the expense of the former is nearly double. There are the friends of the passengers, and numbers of persons who seem particularly well acquainted with the purser, who bring fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, and lobsters.

From this description it may be imagined that there is a motley and considerable crowd; but it will scarcely be imagined that there is only one regulation, which is, that no persons may enter or depart till the mail-bags have been landed. The wharf is small and at night unlighted, and the scene which ensued on our landing about eight o'clock in the evening reminded me, not by contrast, but resemblance, of descriptions which travellers give of the disembarkation at Alexandria. Directly that the board was laid from the Canada to the wharf a rush both in and out took place, in which I was separated from my relations, and should have fallen had not a friend, used to the scene of disorder, come to my assistance.

The wharf was dirty, unlighted, and under repair, covered with heaps and full of holes. My friend was carrying three parcels, when three or four men made a rush at us, seized them from him, and were only compelled to

relinquish them by some sharp physical arguments. A large gateway, lighted by one feeble oil-lamp at the head of the wharf, was then opened, and the crowd pent up behind it came pouring down the sloping road. There was a simultaneous rush of trucks, hand-carts, waggons, and cars, their horses at full trot or canter, two of them rushing against the gravel-heap on which I was standing, where they were upset. Struggling, shouting, beating, and scuffling, the drivers all forced their way upon the wharf, regardless of cries from the ladies and threats from the gentlemen, for all the passengers had landed and were fighting their way to an ice-shop. Porters were scuffling with each other for the possession of portmanteaus, wheels were locked, and drivers were vehemently expostulating in the rich brogue of Erin; people were jostling each other in their haste, or diving into the dimly-lighted custom-house, and it must have been fully half an hour before we had extricated ourselves from this chaos of mismanagement and disorder, by scrambling over gravel-heaps and piles of timber, into the dirty, unlighted streets of Halifax.

Dirty they were then, though the weather was very dry, for oyster-shells, fish heads and bones, potato-skins, and cabbage-stalks littered the roads; but dirty was a word which does not give the faintest description of the almost impassable state in which I found them, when I waded through them ankle-deep in mud some months afterwards.

We took apartments for two days at the Waverley House, a most comfortless place, yet the best inn at Halifax. Three hours after we landed, the Canada fired her guns, and steamed off to Boston; and as I saw her coloured lights disappear round the heads of the harbour, I did not feel the slightest regret at having taken leave of her for ever. We remained for two days at Halifax, and saw the little which was worth seeing in the Nova-Scotian capital. I was disappointed to find the description of the lassitude and want of enterprise of the Nova-Scotians, given by Judge Halliburton, so painfully correct. Halifax possesses one of the deepest and most commodious harbours in the world, and is so safe that ships need no other guide into it than their charts. There are several small fortified islands at its mouth, which assist in its defence without impeding the navigation. These formidable forts protect the entrance, and defend the largest naval depot which we possess in North America. The town itself, which contains about 25,000 people, is on a small peninsula, and stands on a slope rising from the water's edge to the citadel, which is heavily armed, and amply sufficient for every purpose of defence. There are very great natural advantages in the neighbourhood, lime, coal, slate, and minerals being abundant, added to which Halifax is the nearest port to Europe.

Yet it must be confessed that the Nova-Scotians are far behind, not only their neighbours in the States, but their fellow-subjects in Canada and New Brunswick. There are capacious wharfs and roomy warehouses, yet one laments over the absence of everything like trade and business. With the finest harbour in North America, with a country abounding in minerals, and coasts swarming with fish, the Nova-Scotians appear to have expunged the word progress from their dictionary--still live in shingle houses, in streets without side walks, rear long-legged ponies, and talk largely about railroads, which they seem as if they would never complete, because they trust more to the House of Assembly than to their own energies. Consequently their astute and enterprising neighbours the Yankees, the acute speculators of Massachusetts and Connecticut, have seized upon the traffic which they have allowed to escape them, and have diverted it to the thriving town of Portland in Maine. The day after we landed was one of intense heat, the thermometer stood at 93 in the shade. The rays of a

summer sun scorched the shingle roof of our hotel, and, penetrating the thin plank walls, made the interior of the house perfectly unbearable. There were neither sunshades nor Venetian blinds, and not a tree to shade the square white wooden house from an almost tropical heat. When I came into the parlour I found Colonel H---- stretched on the sofa, almost expiring with heat, my cousin standing panting before the window in his shirtsleeves, and his little boy lying moaning on the hearthrug, with his shoes off, and his complexion like that of a Red Indian. One of our party had been promenading the broiling streets of Halifax without his coat! A gentleman from one of the Channel Islands, of unsophisticated manners and excellent disposition, who had landed with us en route to a town on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, had fancied our North American colonies for ever "locked in regions of thick-ribbed ice," and consequently was abundantly provided with warm clothing of every description. With this he was prepared to face a thermometer at twenty degrees below zero.

But when he found a torrid sun, and the thermometer at 93 in the shade, his courage failed him, and, with all his preconceived ideas overthrown by the burning experience of one day, despair seized on him, and his expressions of horror and astonishment were coupled with lamentations over the green fertility of Jersey. The colonel was obliged to report himself at head-quarters in his full uniform, which was evidently tight and hot; and after changing his apparel three times in the day, apparently without being a gainer, he went out to make certain meteorological inquiries, among others if 93 were a common temperature.

The conclusion he arrived at was, that the "climate alternates between the heat of India and the cold of Lapland."

We braved the heat at noonday in a stroll through the town, for, from the perfect dryness of the atmosphere, it is not of an oppressive nature. I saw few whites in the streets at this hour. There were a great many Indians lying by the door-steps, having disposed of their baskets, besoms, and raspberries, by the sale of which they make a scanty livelihood. The men, with their jet-black hair, rich complexions, and dark liquid brown eyes, were almost invariably handsome; and the women, whose beauty departs before they are twenty, were something in the "Meg Merrilies" style.

When the French first colonised this country, they called it "Acadie." The tribes of the Mic-Mac Indians peopled its forests, and, among the dark woods which then surrounded Halifax, they worshipped the Great Spirit, and hunted the moose-deer. Their birch-bark wigwams peeped from among the trees, their squaws urged their light canoes over the broad deep harbour, and their wise men spoke to them of the "happy hunting grounds." The French destroyed them not, and gave them a corrupted form of Christianity, inciting their passions against the English by telling them that they were the people who had crucified the Saviour. Better had it been for them if battle or pestilence had swept them at once away.

The Mic-Macs were a fierce and warlike people, too proud to mingle with an alien race--too restless and active to conform to the settled habits of civilization. Too proud to avail themselves of its advantages, they learned its vices, and, as the snow-wreaths in spring, they melted away before the poisonous "fire-water," and the deadly curse of the white man's wars. They had welcomed the "pale faces" to the "land of the setting sun," and withered up before them, smitten by their crimes.

Almost destitute of tradition, their history involved in obscurity, their broad lands filled with their unknown and nameless graves, these mighty

racers have passed away; they could not pass into slavery, therefore they must die.

At some future day a mighty voice may ask of those who have thus wronged the Indian, "Where is now thy brother?" It is true that frequently we arrived too late to save them as a race from degradation and dispersion; but as they heavily tottered along to their last home, under the burden of the woes which contact with civilization ever entails upon the aborigines, we might have spoken to them the tidings of "peace on earth and good will to men"--of a Saviour "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through his gospel." Far away amid the thunders of Niagara, surrounded by a perpetual rainbow, Iris Island contains almost the only known burying-place of the race of red men. Probably the simple Indians who buried their dead in a place of such difficult access, and sacred to the Great Spirit, did so from a wish that none might ever disturb their ashes. None can tell how long those interred there have slept their last long sleep, but the ruthless hands of the white men have profaned the last resting-place of the departed race.

There were also numerous blacks in the streets, and, if I might judge from the brilliant colours and good quality of their clothing, they must gain a pretty good living by their industry. A large number of these blacks and their parents were carried away from the States by one of our admirals in the war of 1812, and landed at Halifax.

The capital of Nova Scotia looks like a town of cards, nearly all the buildings being of wood. There are wooden houses, wooden churches, wooden wharfs, wooden slates, and, if there are side walks, they are of wood also. I was pleased at a distance with the appearance of two churches, one of them a Gothic edifice, but on nearer inspection I found them to be of wood, and took refuge in the substantial masonry of the really handsome Province Building and Government House. We went up to the citadel, which crowns the hill, and is composed of an agglomeration of granite walls, fosses, and casemates, mounds, ditches, barracks, and water-tanks.

If I was pleased with the familiar uniforms of the artillerymen who lounged about the barracks, I was far more so with the view from the citadel. It was a soft summer evening, and, seen through the transparent atmosphere, everything looked unnaturally near. The large town of Halifax sloped down to a lake-like harbour, about two miles wide, dotted with islands; and ranges of picturesque country spangled with white cottages lay on the other side. The lake or firth reminded me of the Gareloch, and boats were sailing about in all directions before the evening breeze. From tangled coppices of birch and fir proceeded the tinkle of the bells of numerous cows, and, mingled with the hum of the city, the strains of a military band rose from the streets to our ears.

With so many natural advantages, and such capabilities for improvement, I cannot but regret the unhappy quarrels and maladministration which threaten to leave the noble colony of Nova Scotia an incubus and excrescence on her flourishing and progressive neighbours, Canada and New Brunswick. From the \_talk\_ about railways, steamers, and the House of Assembly, it is pleasant to turn to the one thing which has been really done, namely, the establishment of an electric telegraph line to St. John, and thence to the States. By means of this system of wires, which is rough and inexpensive to a degree which in England we should scarcely believe, the news brought by the English mail steamer is known at Boston, New York, New Orleans, Cincinnati, and all the great American cities, before it has had time to reach the environs of Halifax itself.

The telegraph costs about 20\_l.\_ per mile, and the wires are generally supported on the undressed stems of pines, but are often carried from tree to tree along miserable roads, or through the deep recesses of the forests.

The stores in Halifax are pretty good, all manufactured articles being sold at an advance on English prices. Books alone are cheap and abundant, being the American editions of pirated English works.

On the morning when we left Halifax I was awakened by the roll of the British drum and the stirring strains of the Highland bagpipe. Ready equipped for the tedious journey before us, from Halifax to Pictou in the north of the colony, I was at the inn-door at six, watching the fruitless attempts of the men to pile our mountain of luggage on the coach.

Do not let the word \_coach\_ conjure up a vision of "\_the good old times\_," a dashing mail with a well-groomed team of active bays, harness all "spick and span," a gentlemanly-looking coachman, and a guard in military scarlet, the whole affair rattling along the road at a pace of ten miles an hour.

The vehicle in which we performed a journey of 120 miles in 20 hours deserves a description. It consisted of a huge coach-body, slung upon two thick leather straps; the sides were open, and the places where windows ought to have been were screened by heavy curtains of tarnished moose-deer hide. Inside were four cross-seats, intended to accommodate twelve persons, who were very imperfectly sheltered from the weather. Behind was a large rack for luggage, and at the back of the driving-seat was a bench which held three persons. The stage was painted scarlet, but looked as if it had not been washed for a year. The team of six strong white horses was driven by a Yankee, remarkable only for his silence. About a ton of luggage was packed on and behind the stage, and two open portmanteaus were left behind without the slightest risk to their contents.

Twelve people and a baby were with some difficulty stowed in the stage, and the few interstices were filled up with baskets, bundles, and packages. The coachman whipped his horses, and we rattled down the uneven streets of Halifax to a steam ferry-boat, which conveyed the stage across to Dartmouth, and was so well arranged that the six horses had not to alter their positions.

Our road lay for many miles over a barren, rocky, undulating country, covered with var and spruce trees, with an undergrowth of raspberry, wild rhododendron, and alder. We passed a chain of lakes extending for sixteen miles, their length varying from one to three miles, and their shores covered with forests of gloomy pine. People are very apt to say that Nova Scotia is sterile and barren, because they have not penetrated into the interior. It is certainly rather difficult of access, but I was by no means sorry that my route lay through it. The coast of Nova Scotia is barren, and bears a very distinct resemblance to the east of Scotland. The climate, though severe in winter and very foggy, is favourable both to health and vegetation. The peach and grape ripen in the open air, and the cultivation of corn and potatoes amply repays the cultivator. A great part of the country is still covered with wood, evidently a second growth, for, wherever the trees of the fir tribe are cut down or destroyed by fire, hard-wood trees spring up.

So among the maple, the American elm, and the purple-blossomed sumach, the

huge scorched and leafless stems of pines would throw up their giant arms as if to tell of some former conflagration. In clearings among these woods, slopes of ground are to be seen covered with crops of oats and maize, varied with potatoes and pumpkins. Wherever the ground is unusually poor on the surface, mineral treasures abound. There are beds of coal of vast thickness; iron in various forms is in profusion, and the supply of gypsum is inexhaustible. Many parts of the country are very suitable for cattle-rearing, and there are "water privileges" without end in the shape of numerous rivers. I have seldom seen finer country in the colonies than the large tract of cleared undulating land about Truro, and I am told that it is far exceeded by that in the neighbourhood of Windsor. Wherever apple-trees were planted they seemed to flourish, and the size and flavour of their fruit evidences a short, hot summer. While the interior of the country is so fertile, and is susceptible of a high degree of improvement, it is scarcely fair in the Nova-Scotians to account for their backwardness by pointing strangers to their sterile and iron-bound coast. But they are a moral, hardy, and loyal people; none of our colonial fellow-subjects are more attached to the British crown, or more ready to take up arms in its defence.

I was greatly pleased with much that I heard, and with the little I saw of the Nova-Scotians. They seemed temperate, sturdy, and independent, and the specimens we had of them in the stage were civil, agreeable, and intelligent.

After passing the pretty little village of Dartmouth, we came upon some wigwams of birch-bark among the trees. Some squaws, with papooses strapped upon their backs, stared vacantly at us as we passed, and one little barefooted Indian, with a lack of apparel which showed his finely moulded form to the best advantage, ran by the side of the coach for two or three miles, bribed by coppers which were occasionally thrown to him.

A dreary stage of eighteen miles brought us to Shultze's, a road-side inn by a very pretty lake, where we were told the "\_coach breakfasted\_." Whether Transatlantic coaches can perform this, to us, unknown feat, I cannot pretend to say, but we breakfasted. A very coarse repast was prepared for us, consisting of stewed salt veal, country cheese, rancid salt butter, fried eggs, and barley bread; but we were too hungry to find fault either with it, or with the charge made for it, which equalled that at a London hotel. Our Yankee coachman, a man of monosyllables, sat next to me, and I was pleased to see that he regaled himself on tea instead of spirits.

We packed ourselves into the stage again with great difficulty, and how the forty-eight limbs fared was shown by the painful sensations experienced for several succeeding days. All the passengers, however, were in perfectly good humour, and amused each other during the eleven hours spent in this painful way. At an average speed of six miles an hour we travelled over roads of various descriptions, plank, corduroy, and sand; up long heavy hills, and through swamps swarming with mosquitoes.

Every one has heard of corduroy roads, but how few have experienced their miseries! They are generally used for traversing swampy ground, and are formed of small pine-trees deprived of their branches, which are laid across the track alongside each other. The wear and tear of travelling soon separates these, leaving gaps between; and when, added to this, one trunk rots away, and another sinks down into the swamp, and another tilts up, you may imagine such a jolting as only leather springs could bear. On the very worst roads, filled with deep holes, or covered with small

granite boulders, the stage only swings on the straps. Ordinary springs, besides dislocating the joints of the passengers, would be wrenched and broken after a few miles travelling.

Even as we were, faces sometimes came into rather close proximity to each other and to the side railings, and heads sustained very unpleasant collisions. The amiable man who was so disappointed with the American climate suffered very much from the journey. He said he had thought a French diligence the climax of discomfort, but a "stage was misery, oh torture!" Each time that we had rather a worse jolt than usual the poor man groaned, which always drew forth a chorus of laughter, to which he submitted most good-humouredly. Occasionally he would ask the time, when some one would point maliciously to his watch, remarking, "Twelve hours more," or "Fifteen hours more," when he would look up with an expression of despair. The bridges wore a very un-English feature. Over the small streams or brooks they consisted of three pines covered with planks, without any parapet--with sometimes a plank out, and sometimes a hole in the middle. Over large streams they were wooden erections of a most peculiar kind, with high parapets; their insecurity being evidenced by the notice, "Walk your horses, according to law,"--a notice generally disregarded by our coachman, as he trotted his horses over the shaking and rattling fabric.

We passed several small streams, and one of a large size, the Shubenacadie, a wide, slow, muddy river, flowing through willows and hedges, like the rivers in the fen districts of England. At the mouth of the Shubenacadie the tides rise and fall forty feet.

In Nova Scotia the animals seemed to be more carefully lodged than the people. Wherever we changed horses, we drove into a lofty shed, opening into a large stable with a boarded floor scrupulously clean, generally containing twenty horses. The rigour of the climate in winter necessitates such careful provision for the support of animal life. The coachman went into the stable and chose his team, which was brought out, and then a scene of kicking, biting, and screaming ensued, ended by the most furious kickers being put to the wheel; and after a certain amount of talking, and settling the mail-bags, the ponderous vehicle moved off again, the leaders always rearing for the first few yards.

For sixty miles we were passing through woods, the trees sometimes burned and charred for several miles, and the ground all blackened round them. We saw very few clearings, and those there were consisted merely of a few acres of land, separated from the forest by rude "snake-fences." Stumps of trees blackened by fire stood up among the oat-crops; but though they look extremely untidy, they are an unavoidable evil for two or three years, till the large roots decay.

Eleven hours passed by not at all wearisomely to me, though my cousins and their children suffered much from cramp and fatigue, and at five, after an ascent of three hours, we began to descend towards a large tract of cultivated undulating country, in the centre of which is situated a large settlement called Truro. There, at a wretched hostelry, we stopped to dine, but the meal by no means answered to our English ideas of dinner. A cup of tea was placed by each plate; and after the company, principally consisting of agricultural settlers, had made a substantial meal of mutton, and the potatoes for which the country is famous, they solaced themselves with this beverage. No intoxicating liquor was placed upon the table, [Footnote: I write merely of what fell under my own observation, for there has been so much spirit-drinking in Nova Scotia, that the

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