

A
REMINISCENCE
of the
EARLY DAYS



WRITTEN BY MRS. DAVID FLEMING, COBOURG,
IN HER EIGHTY-SECOND YEAR

MCMXXI

A Reminiscence of the Early Days

Written by Mrs. David Fleming, Cobourg, in her 82nd year



BOUT the year 1832 my dear father bid farewell to father, mother, brothers and sisters, and the dear old England, the land of his birth and boyhood, and launched out on the broad Atlantic in a sailing vessel bound for Canada—the land of promise—in the hope of bettering his circumstances, having heard of this remote country. There were no steamships or fast sailing vessels at that time, and a voyage

from England in those days meant as many weeks tossing about on the ocean as days now. He was only a poor young man, with nothing more than barely his passage to Cobourg, and, when he landed on that small wharf and looked out over the new land, and the few houses which composed all that was then Cobourg, all that he possessed apart from his chest and meagre outfit of clothing was a British half crown, which his father had given him at parting, and which he prized so highly that he never parted with it, no matter how hard pressed he was for money, and it still remained in his possession as long as he lived. At his death it descended to his son, James, my brother, and at his death to his son, James, being the property of four generations in succession. On one side of this old coin was the head of King George III., and I have often thought this old coin was in itself a history.

Cobourg at that time was little else than a cedar swamp. There were only a few houses at that time, and but little work to be had, no matter how willing one would have done it. But he plodded along, working his way as best he could, amid hardships and privations—and often with a lonely homesick heart. There was scarcely any money in circulation at that time, and the brass buttons then worn on the moleskin jackets and trousers would pass for money. When he was fortunate enough to get work, the wage was decidedly small. Old John

McCarthy at that time kept a sort of general store on Division street, and my father was often paid for his work by getting an order on this store, where he would get such things as he most needed. I have often heard my father say that he cut cordwood many a day for three York shillings a cord. That in our day would be thirty-seven and a half cents. The old seminary or college, or, as it was afterward called, the Upper Canada Academy, was in course of erection; also the first Presbyterian church. It was situated between what is now known as Ontario and William streets, fronting on William street. This church was built of gray stone. The first minister who labored here was the Rev. Thomas Alexander. Here in the little burying ground by the old stone Kirk reposes the dust of many of the early pioneers of those days. I have heard my parents and others say that it was so wet and swampy that when a grave was dug it would fill up with water, and the coffin would have to be lowered down in this—there to take their last long repose. The old church has been pulled down for some years, and not one stone left upon another to tell where it once stood. I have often thought that the people of Cobourg made a great mistake when they did away with this time-honored building. It should have been left as an old landmark and monument to the memory of those early pioneers whose ashes repose in the old Kirkyard. It was here they met together, a small band of faithful worshippers whose names should ever be held in sacred remembrance by all their descendants for generations to come. What a debt we owe to those worthy men and women who braved the ocean's storms, the hardships, the separation from home and friends coming to this country—then an almost unbroken forest—hewing out for themselves and children homes in the new land, with but little of this world's wealth, poor, but honest and persevering. Laying the foundation of our country's prosperity and the privileges we now enjoy are not so much our doing and daring as theirs, and we should cherish their memories with reverence and gratitude.

In the same year, 1832, my mother's family sailed from Glasgow, Scotland, and, after a seven weeks' voyage on the Atlantic, they arrived at Quebec. The family consisted of father, mother, seven daughters and two sons. The eldest son was a stonemason by trade, and came to Canada two years in advance of the rest of the family. They were two weeks on the journey from Quebec to Cobourg. They were brought up the St. Lawrence River on flat boats or scows, drawn along by

oxen driven along the shore, with long ropes or chains attached to the ox yoke, thence to the boats. When they arrived in Cobourg there was not a house to be had for them to move into, so they finally had to take up their abode for three months in a barn just north of where the Grand Trunk Station now is, and known as Tanner's barn. Here they lived and slept, doing their cooking outside. Later my grandfather rented a farm between Cobourg and Grafton, known as the Barnum farm.

Not long after arriving in Canada my father and mother met for the first time, and in due time were united in marriage, and shortly after my father took up a one hundred acre farm three miles northeast of what is now the Village of Baltimore. This land was heavily timbered, and not a tree cut on it till my father cut enough to get logs to build a small house. When this was done he and mother moved into it, and I have often heard my mother say she could look up the old chimney and see the branches of trees hanging over it. The land all around there was very heavily timbered with the best of white pine and cedar, maple and beech, white and black ash, white and black birch, also white and black oak. The clearing of this land was a great undertaking, but must be done in order to get a bit of crop in to help toward a living. The trees had first to be chopped down, then the limbs cut off and the brush or tops of the trees piled in heaps. The tree itself was cut into logs 12 or 15 feet long, and to cut down ten or twelve acres of woods meant a lot of hard laborious work. After the brush got dead and dry by the summer wind and sun, then they had what they called burning the fallow. A good day was waited for when they thought the wind in a favorable direction. Then the fire was started in several places around the fallow, the wind carrying the flames from one brush heap to another, until finally the entire fallow was burned or burning. After the burning came the logging bees. It was almost an everyday occurrence to see the smoke in dense masses arising from some neighbor's burning fallow. Every man who owned an ox team in the settlement turned out on a set day to haul these burnt logs into large heaps. They were drawn to the heap by a strong chain attached to the ox yoke; then skid poles were laid one end on the ground and the other on the pile, the men rolling up the logs with a strong pole called a hand pry, until the heap was large enough. When these logs were all into heaps, then the second burning began and continued until the fallow was clear of everything except stumps. They would

then sow the fall wheat on this, and drag it in without any plowing. The drag was a home-made one, shaped like the letter A. Many a night my father chopped down trees in the fallow by the light of the moon, and would call my mother out to hear the howling of the timber wolves at no great distance. They were very numerous, and were often seen in packs of twelve or fifteen. Bears were also numerous, and many a settler had some of their first cattle devoured by their ravenous greed. Deer were also plentiful, and when clearing up the land we would often find deer horns or antlers. The wild pigeons were in immense numbers, flying in great flocks so thick they would darken the sunshine around us. Many were the numbers my father would shoot and bring home when returning from work, as he always carried his old flint gun with him as he went to and from his daily toil. But as the years rolled on, and the land was cleared, the denizens of the forest became fewer, and the wild pigeons began to disappear till they finally became extinct altogether.

I can now look back to that little log house where my two sisters, myself and brother were born, he being three years my junior. I can see in memory that humble home and surroundings, just as they appeared to us in childhood. The big wide open fireplace with large stones behind the fire, and large flat stones laid as evenly as possible for the hearth. The chimney from the chamber floor or ceiling was built by laying sticks across each other at four corners, and plastering between the sticks with a sort of mortar made with clay and chopped straw which would adhere together and make quite a smooth surface, which would stand both heat and cold. Then for the fire a large back log was rolled in and put in place, and the andirons to keep the smaller sticks from rolling down. What huge fires we would have in that old-fashioned fireplace, throwing heat and glow all over the house! The fire was never out in winter, and seldom in summer, as there were no matches at that time to start fires with. Father used flint and punk to light his pipe or burn a heap of chips or brush when working away from the house. He would hold the punk in his hand, strike the flint with the back of his jackknife, and this would make sparks of fire which would ignite the punk which would burn. In summer when we did not need so much fire the coals were gathered into a heap and covered with ashes to keep the fire from going out. But if it happened to go out, some of us would be sent, fireshovel in hand, to our nearest neighbor's to borrow enough coals to start ours going again. The

house was not very large, being 12 by 18 feet in size, with no partitions. One door shut out the frost and storm, and two small windows greeted the day—one in the east and the other in the south. A sneak of my father's making, with a strong string attached to it, which was put through a small hole in the door and hung on the outside during the day, so that anyone pulling on this string could lift the latch and open the door, and at night the string was drawn inside for safety. We had very little furniture to decorate with. Two beds stood at the east end of the house and the window between. Under the window stood my father's chest; the table stood in the centre of the floor; three or four chairs with some stools of my father's make and the dear old clock on a shelf directly opposite the door. These, along with mother's chest, and a few dishes and pots, also the long-handled frying pan and bake kettle were about all of our possessions at that time. The bake kettle was about 14 inches across, with a lid to fit it, and three or four legs, perhaps two inches long. Mother would put a large loaf to rise in this and when light enough to bake, the coals were drawn out on the hearth in front of the fire, and the bake kettle set over these coals and coals spread over the lid. Then the baking process would begin and the kettle replenished with fresh coal, turning it around to the fire so that it would bake evenly. This needed quite a bit of skill and attention. But what a large fine loaf would turn out of this old kettle, bread of the very best quality, and fit for a king! We were all happy and contented in our humble home, never wishing nor longing for others things we knew nothing about.

Christmas to us was a great day, and one we looked forward to with longing and pleasure, not because we got our stockings filled with toys or other good things, as there was little of such things in those days. But as soon as the clock struck the midnight hour, one could hear guns firing, horns blowing, and cowbells ringing all over the settlement, and my father and other men of the neighborhood would start off with their guns, and go through the neighborhood, calling at every house, where there was always cake and something to drink on the table, and all good wishes were exchanged for a happy Christmas to each and all. Then father would come home, feed his oxen and other stock, have breakfast and get the old sleigh ready, while mother dressed us in the best we had, which was of a very humble style, get herself ready, and then we all bundled into the sleigh, being one of my father's make. The oxen were hitched to it, and away we would go

through the woods, calling at every house in the settlement, with Christmas greetings and good cheer from everyone. This was to us such enjoyment, and to the grownup folks the enjoyment was not less than to the children, for everyone was as good as his neighbor, and the best of friendly feeling and fellowship existed amongst them, and I can now look back to those days with fondness, and feel they were in many respects superior to what they are at the present time. It was always my father's custom to feed a sheaf of oats to every one of his cattle on Christmas morning, as if he thought they, too, should have something extra to enjoy on this memorable morning. The few cattle that each settler possessed roamed and pastured in the woods in summer. Every herd had a cowbell carried by some particular one of the herd, and every one of the herd knew the sound of their own bell, and would follow it, seldom mixing up with any other herd of cattle. The black flies and mosquitos were numerous and troublesome, and the settlers would kindle fires at night in order to keep these pests from tormenting the cattle, as well as to frighten the bears and wolves away. The cattle would gather round these smudges, as if they knew by instinct they were kindled for protection.

There is one incident vividly imprinted in my memory, and will ever remain there, although I was only five or six years old at the time. My sister Rachel was about three and a half years older than myself. We were sent one evening to look for the cattle. We had crossed the clearing and had come to the edge of the woods, where there was a large tree cut down and lying just outside of the fence which surrounded the clearing. We climbed onto the butt of the tree to listen for the bell, so that we might know what direction to go for the cattle. We heard a noise, and, looking in the direction whence it came, we saw a bear rise up and place his front feet on the same log we were standing on—only amongst the branches. He was looking at us, but we did not wait long to see what his intentions were, but took to our heels and started for home as fast as we could. I, being so much younger than my sister, could not make such rapid progress, but would fall, being tripped by the tenors or roots and the fall wheat, which was then about a foot high. She would help me up and pull me along. I don't remember whether we ever looked back to see if the bear was pursuing us or not. However, we got safely home, although badly frightened, and I have often wondered that my mother sent us on such an errand, knowing that these animals were prowling around.

Huckleberries were very plentiful all through the woods in those early days during the month of July, and parties of the young people would take their lunches with them and go away in the morning huckleberrying, coming home at night with well-filled baskets and pails. These were often dried for winter use, as there were no orchards old enough to bear fruit at the time I refer to. The oldest orchard in the settlement was on the farm now owned and occupied by James Plews, but owned at that time by a family called Lindsay. My brother-in-law, William Brisbin, was one of the family. Every settler had their own maple sugar bush, and when the long sunny days of March came around the trees were tapped and sugar making began. I can remember carrying the spiles around through the sugar bush for my father, as he tapped the trees. This was done by cutting a niche in the tree with the axe, then driving a chisel-shaped gouge into the tree where the niche had been made. The sap ran from the niche, down the spile, then dropped into the sap troughs. These were made about two foot in length, and hollowed out with the axe. Every family made sugar and syrup enough to last from one spring to the next. It was a gala time for us during the sugar making season. My mother always made a barrel of vinegar at the end of the sap season, and this was the best and purest vinegar I have ever tasted.

There were no threshing machines at that time, so the grain had to be beaten out by the flail and main strength. Many a night did my father thresh for hours in this way, by the light of a tallow candle, enclosed in a lantern of his own make. The lantern was about square. The three sides, top and bottom were made of shingles cut the size he wanted. A socket was placed in the centre of the bottom. This held the candle. A pane of glass was placed in the front to give light from the candle, and several small holes in the top to let any smoke escape. A leather strap was tacked onto each side of the top to carry it by, and this hung up in the barn gave light for him to flail out the grain. At that time the very best sample of fall wheat sold for 50 cents, or a half dollar as it was then called, and when the price got up to three and nine pence, or 75 cents, people were highly gratified. The money then was counted in pounds, shillings and pence. Eggs would bring 4 pence a dozen, and butter 6 pence and a York shilling, or $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents a pound, and the seller had to take the price out in the store, seldom receiving a penny in money. The first threshing machines which came out in our neighborhood were owned by

John Taylor and Robert Clapperton, and was an 8 horse power machine—the horses driven around in the same old track for hours while the grain was being threshed and the straw being saved for the winter's fodder. My father made all the shingles used for every building he put up on the barn. This he did in the long evenings by the light of the old fireplace, and we children would play in the shavings he made trimming these shingles sitting on the old shaving horse. I never get the smell of green pine but I am carried back in memory to those early days.

There was no church at that time nearer than Hull's Corners. There the first Methodist church was erected, and still remains, and is used for Sunday School service at the present time. And here in this cemetery beside that little pioneer church reposes the dust of very many of the first pioneers of the surrounding country. After a while there was a log schoolhouse erected in our neighborhood. It was situated a short distance east of where the barns of James Plews now stand, and here in this schoolhouse my sisters, myself and brother received our meagre education. Our first teacher was from England. His name was William Dobson. He and his family lived in a small house just a few steps across the road from the schoolhouse. There were two long desks in the schoolhouse—one for the boys and the other for the girls. These desks were made with sloping sides, and a flat top in the centre, for placing our books, slates and ink bottles on. Then a long bench was on each side, where we sat facing each other when writing or studying. The teacher's desk stood in the southwest corner of the room. There was a step of 8 or 10 inches up to where the desk and teacher stood, so that he had some advantage of seeing over the scholars. Just behind where the teacher stood were these words, written in large capitals: "Thou God Seest Me." The copies in our writing books were all set by the teacher, and the first pens we had to write with were goose quills. The teacher made them for us, and after using them a while, they would wear off dull, and we would have to take them up to the teacher to be sharpened. The days exercises were always begun by the scholars reading a chapter of the scriptures, and, after reading, the teacher prayed, and this was also repeated each evening before the school was dismissed. We had only every other Saturday as a holiday, and, if the teacher had to be away one day during the week, he had to make it up by teaching the Saturday we should have had as a holiday. We were only allowed

two weeks for our summer vacation. In this schoolhouse we would have Sunday services once in two or three weeks, conducted by local preachers. One of these preachers was a Mr. Burrows, a shoemaker by trade, and who had a shop on the west side of Division street. There was also a Mr. Pomeroy and one or two others whose names I have forgotten. These services were always well attended, by both the young and older people. The first Sabbath School was founded and organized by James Mason and Robert Allen, and was well attended by both children and grownup young people of the settlement, and here these good, faithful men taught and explained the scriptures in their own humble way. They have long since passed to their reward, but their influence lives on, and only eternity will reveal the true worth of these faithful devoted lives to the community where they lived and labored for the Master.

Sawlogging was a great factor in those days, with several sawmills in the vicinity. There was Captain Macdonald's to the southeast of us, Carpenter's mill at Baltimore, Mann's mill to the south, Solemon's mill below Baltimore; and to the west Cochrane's and Burnet's mill; and further north on the same stream were Fisher's and Roberts' mills. All these were kept busy sawing into lumber the large pine logs drawn there through the winter. These mills had only the upright saw, and was rather a slow process compared to what came in use a few years later. Lumber was very plentiful and cheap, although of the very best quality. The entire road from Cobourg to Gore's Landing was laid with the very best pine plank, sawn in these different mills, and the flour and bran, which was ground in Short's mill at Keene, was hauled on wagons over this plank road to Cobourg, then transported to Oswego and other places by schooners. I have stood at the door of my old home and counted as many as twenty-one schooners from as far east as I could see the lake to as far west as I could see it. The first boat employed to carry this flour from Keene to Gore's Landing was the old horse boat. Horses were driven around similar to the horse power threshing machines, which came out first, and by this method the boat was driven along—rather a slow process, but one which served the purpose of those times.

The first piece of railroad built in Upper Canada was that running from Cobourg to Harwood, thence across Rice Lake to Hiawatha, or the Indian Village, as it was then called. This piece of road was surveyed and work commenced on it about

1849. It was a great day for Cobourg and surrounding country when the day came around that the first shovelful of earth should be turned on the projected railway. It was a cold winter day, bright and clear, when the crowd witnessed the scene of Mrs. Mackechnie, the mayor's wife, turning the first sod with a silver shovel. I was a witness to this scene myself, although young I have never forgotten it. The road was commenced and finished so that trains were running over it, but the part crossing Rice Lake was never thought safe. They crossed over it for some time, but when the ice broke up in the spring, the force of the ice ruined the bridge. The bridge was first built by driving timbers, called spiles, down into the bottom of the lake, by the use of a battering ram. I remember seeing them at work with this implement. In the winter of 1872, a second attempt was made to reconstruct the bridge. This was done by making cribs of square timber bolted together at the corners and filled with stones. There was a large amount of money expended on it then, but it was finally abandoned before nearing completion, and still remains so. The first locomotive which made the trip over this road was called the Mayflower, it being a very small affair compared with what are in use at the present time. The Grand Trunk Railway was not built at this time, so the mail was carried from Toronto to Montreal and return by the Weller stages, Mr. Weller, the owner being a resident of Cobourg. These stages were drawn by four horses and carried the mail and passengers. John Bonar was the man who drove these stages. He was a relative of the Stott family, who are well known in this locality. For four years and a half John Bonar drove these stages for Mr. Weller. On the 16th of October, 1856, John Bonar drove the last stage from Toronto to Montreal. He was allowed four hours from Oshawa to Cobourg. On October 17, 1856, the Grand Trunk Railway ran its first regular train to Oshawa, then the terminus, and brought the mails; and on the 27th of October, 1856, the first train went from Toronto to Montreal, and the Weller stages were put off. There were four hundred horses used in those four and a half years en route from Toronto to Montreal.

Bees of various kinds were very much in vogue in those early days. Besides the logging bees, there were the barn and house raisings. At a barn raising forty or more men would be required to raise the green timber frame. This was done by ropes, pikepoles and main strength. After the entire frame was erected, then came the christening of it. Several men

would stand on the plate, which, by the way, means the timber the ends of the rafters are fastened to. These men would have a bottle filled with something. I cannot think it was liquor, although liquor was used pretty freely at that time. Some one of these men would call out: "Here is a good frame, it deserves a good name. What shall we call it?" Some would suggest one thing and some another. So after deciding on a name it was called out, and the bottle swung round three times, accompanied by three cheers from the crowd, and thrown as far as possible, only to be broken and the contents spilled, so I think it was filled with Adam's Ale and nothing stronger.

After 8 or 10 years spent in our little log house, my father built a much larger one, farther north on the farm. The house was named Rose on the Hill. Then the barn was put up, and named the Thistle beside the Rose. My father, being English, the Rose is England's emblem, and mother, being Scotch, the Thistle is the emblem of Scotland, so that is why they were so called. Thomas Cummings, a neighbor, did all the framing and carpenter work for my father.

While the men had their bees, the women had also their share. Everyone spun and manufactured their wool into flannel and fulled cloth for the men's wear, besides blankets for the house and horse blankets; also yarn for socks and mitts. After the sheep were washed and clipped in the spring, the women would have what they called picking bees, that is, pulling the wool apart and getting the dirt out of it, so as to make it ready for carding. It was then sent to the carding mill at Baltimore, which was then run and operated by two bachelor brothers, named Jim and Joe Brooks. After the wool was carded the buzz and hum of the spinning wheel was heard in every house or barn, as some did their spinning and quilting on the barn floor. There were seven weavers in a radius of seven miles, and these were all kept busy weaving the flannel and other things for general use. When the weaving was done and each family got their web home, the tailor would come with his press board, thimble and scissors and big irons, or goose, for pressing, and make up the fulled cloth for the men and boys; and a sewing woman would be got to help make up the flannel for the women and children. I cannot remember how the tailor and dressmaker were paid for their services, but I can remember how pleased and proud we would be when we got on our new home-made flannel dress. The time-honored quilting bee was a common affair in those days. The young women would be invited to come on a set day to help do this work,

which was generally on the barn floor. Then there were husking bees, and, later on, when the orchards began to bear fruit in plenty, we had the paring bees. A long table was rigged up, usually of rough boards, almost the length of the room, and anyone who had paring machines would pare the apples, while others would core and string the quarters. These would be hung up on poles near the fire to dry for the next summer's use. At this we would work like beaver until 10 o'clock or later; then the tables cleared away and eatables served; and then dancing would begin, and continue for two or three hours; then all start for home, for, perhaps, the same would be repeated the next night in some other neighbor's house.

In 1837 my father, Robert Allen, Lyman McCarthy and others had to shoulder their guns and turn out in defence of our country and laws. This was the time of the McKenzie rebellion. Captain Boswell, of Cobourg, was then in command of the men. Father and others were gone for some time and mother was left at home in the heart of the woods with her children and everything to look after. I don't suppose mother or any of those belonging to the men who had gone to help to save the situation knew anything of their movements. With what anxiety and suspense they would wait for tidings from their loved ones! I have often thought what bravery and courage these early settlers were endowed with. Their loved one all returned in safety after things were settled, and what a relief it must have been for those who waited so anxiously at home. There was no such things as a postage stamp in those days, and letters going from here to the old country cost six pence in transit, and paid written on the letter which was folded and the ends inserted into each other and sealed with sealing wax. Envelopes had not come into use at that time, which would be 1840.

The first paper printed in Cobourg was called the Eastern Examiner and Cobourg Reformer, then The Star, and a paper called The Newcastle Gazette. All around this part was called Newcastle District. Where the house of refuge is now, or the old people's home, was built in 1831, and was the court house and jail. All around that locality was called Amherst for some time, and in the twenties Cobourg was called Hardscrabble. I have read that some wanted it called Burkville, but the town was named Cobourg about 1816 or 1817. When Charlotte Princess of Wales was married to Leopold of Saxe-Coburg.

Colonel Bolton, of Cobourg, kept a pack of hounds in those early days, and would often come out around our settlement

on a hunting tour. The men wore red coats and hunter uniforms, mounted on horseback, blowing the huntsman's horn to call the hounds together, ten or fifteen of them barking and howling, and how frightened we children would be when we seen and heard these gaunt brutes coming near.

About 1859 there was quite an exciting time when word was received that the Prince of Wales was coming to Canada, and would visit Cobourg. If I remember rightly, he was to be in Cobourg on September 6th or 7th, 1859, and everyone was planning to be in Cobourg to see the Royal guest and future King. We were all up in good time on this memorable occasion, getting ready to come to town, and the sun was just rising when we drove down Division street, after driving eight miles. The town was gay with flags, mottoes and streamers, bearing words of welcome such as the following: Welcome hope of England, Welcome son of our noble Queen, Welcome for his own sake and for his noble mother. He was expected to come by train, and a platform was erected at the station, where a band of little girls, arrayed in white, were to sing for him. We waited and wandered about all day, hourly expecting him to arrive, but were disappointed. There were no telephones at that time or we might have known why the delay. But the sun was just going down when we started for home, a very tired and much disappointed bunch, as he did not arrive till after nine o'clock that night, and came by boat. A grand ball was held in his honor in the town hall that night, and quite a number of the Cobourg ladies had the honor and pleasure of being the Prince's partner in the dance. The Prince would then be nineteen years of age.

In the year 1866 we had the Fenian raid. My brother and several of the young men in our neighborhood were called out to help quell the disturbance, which was soon done, but not before several brave fellows lost their lives in their country's defence.

Upwards of 70 years have passed since those memorable days of my childhood. The old pioneers have all passed away, and very few of their succeeding generation are left. Changes innumerable have taken place, but the old days, and my old home with its hallowed associations, can never be effaced from memory's page. I wandered back a few years ago to see the dear old home, and the hills and valley where, with my dear brother and sisters, we had roamed and played together, happy barefooted children. As I drew near the dear old place what thoughts crowded into my memory. But, oh! how

changed everything was. The shrubs and trees we had carried from the woods and planted in our young days had grown so tall and thick—they almost hid the house from view. All was silent as the grave; no loved one of the bygone days stepped forth to greet me or give me a warm clasp of the hand, no familiar voice bid me welcome home. Father, mother, sisters, and brother gone from this earthly scene, and I alone left to tell the story. I turned away from that hallowed spot, sacred in my memory, with a sad aching heart, and a feeling of loneliness words cannot describe, for in all probability I will not see it again. But I live in hope of again meeting the loved of long ago, where the ties that were severed here on earth will again be re-united.

If this little sketch interests or gives any pleasure or enjoyment to the reader, then will I feel repaid for writing it.

(Dedicated to Dear Eugenie at her own request)



This is a composition I wrote when a little schoolgirl in the old log schoolhouse where I received my meagre education:

I was born in a log house
By the edge of a pathless wood;
Where the tall pines reared their lofty heads,
And the ancient oaks there stood.

The wolves did often howl around,
And the foxes were thick there;
They used to carry our fowls away,
And to the woods with them repare.

But further back, as the land was cleared,
The wolves went further away;
But by night we would sometimes hear their howls
And their far-off distant bay.

As the years rolled on and the forest cleared,
And people settled there,
We heard no more of the wolves by night,
Nor yet of the fox nor the bear.

It is seven years now since we left that home,
The house has been pulled away;
But it comes fondly back to my memory,
As it had been yesterday.

TO THE DAYS THAT ARE GONE

As I sit all alone I am thinking
 Of the loved happy days that are gone;
And the home of my youth and my childhood
 Seem fraught with a charm all its own;
I think of the little old log house,
 Which stood at the foot of the hill;
The clear streams that ran through the meadow
 They are fresh in my memory still.

How oft I have played in that pebbly brook,
 In childhood's thoughtless hours;
Or roamed through the maple sugar bush
 To find the sweet Mayflowers;
And the song of the many wildbirds
 Would greet my listening ears,
And at eventide the Whippoorwill's note
 Rang out both loud and clear.

In memory I see my father yet,
 When his long summer day was o'er;
As he sat smoking his pipe in the twilight
 In the little old log house door;
He drove with strong arm his ox team then,
 And neighbors turned out heart and hand
To help each other at logging bees—
 Clearing up the new fallow land.

Every man was as good as his neighbor then,
 All hopeful, contented and free,
But the pride and the style of the present time,
 I really don't like to see;
Time has rolled on in its ceaseless tread,
 And many a change has it wrought;
Stately homes and dwellings have taken the place
 Of the humble old-fashioned cot.

Yes, time has rolled on and borne us along,
 How fast seems the years to have sped;
And the loved and cherished of long ago
 Are numbered amongst the dead;
And as memory carries me back again
 To those happy days that were mine,
No present joys are as dear to me
 As the days of Auld Lang Syne.