

* * * *

For nine years after the death of Captain Gilkison, from 1833 to 1842, Elora made but little progress. Those who came to the village during this time will be mentioned later ; in the meantime it is necessary to refer to

The Bon-accord Settlement

The following narrative was written by Mr. George Elmslie, one of the first settlers in that upper part of the Township of Nichol, called the Bon-accord. As will be seen, it is both interesting and authentic.

As originally written Mr. Elmslie did not give, except in a few cases, the full names of those he refers to. These we have supplied and have prepared lists of the first settlers in Upper Nichol, which will be given in another place. But before commencing his narrative it might be well to know something of Mr. Elmslie himself.

Mr. George Elmslie was born in the city of Aberdeen in the year of 1803. After receiving a good college education, Mr. Elmslie engaged in business in Aberdeen as a Dry Goods Merchant. As one might suppose, his early experience was not that best fitted for a pioneer. Mr. Elmslie was naturally a student and an interesting book would be very apt to make him forget all about farming, with its constant round of work that should be attended to. It was no wonder, then, that Mr. Elmslie became a school teacher, first, for two winters, in his own house ; then in a school that was built on his farm, and afterward, at Elora, Ancaster, Guelph, Hamilton and Alma. One morning, while on his way to school, Mr. Elmslie was stricken with paralysis and died at Alma on the 19th of October, 1869. Mrs. Elmslie, whose maiden name was Agnes Gibbon, was born at Cullerlie, in the parish of Echt, in Aberdeenshire. She died at the home of her son, William, on July 2nd, 1889, at the age of 83, and was buried beside her husband in the Elora Cemetery.

In their family : Mrs. Robert Philip, formerly of Elora, now deceased ; Mrs. James Middleton, living in Salem ; William, living near Clifford ; George in Hamilton ; Alexander in Galt ; Gordon, at Lachine, and Mrs. David Spragge of Victoria, B. C.

* * * *

In 1831-32 the agitation about the Reform Bill and long continued opposition to it, had caused a great stagnation of business. Trade was dull ; there were many failures ; all were in difficulty, and many in distress.

A little before this time appeared Mr. Fergusson's account of his first tour in the United States and Canada, and not long after it his second tour, while the Chambers' were publishing their admirable papers on Emigration to America, containing letters from actual settlers in Canada. The eyes of thousands were turned to Canada, as a place of refuge.

Three friends in Aberdeen, afterwards joined by others, were in the habit of meeting frequently to consider seriously the advantages or disadvantages of emigrating ; and at length, after obtaining all possible information, they resolved to go out, settle side by side, and thus form a little Aberdeen colony and give it the name Bon-accord—from the motto of the town's arms.

Mr. Elmslie, as being able to wind up his business the most easily, was appointed to go before, and search out a fit location. His instructions were that it should be in a healthy situation—the land fertile, abundant in running streams—and lastly, if Fergus answered the description given by Mr. Fergusson, and a sufficient block could be got in its neighborhood, to prefer it.

All preparations having been completed, and abundant stores of clothing, etc., laid in, on the 30th of June, 1834, Mr. Elmslie set sail from Glasgow, in the *Fania*, Capt. Wright, Commander. The voyage was pleasant. We reached safely the banks of Newfoundland where we were becalmed two days. One terrible danger, through the goodness of Divine Providence, we escaped. A drunken steward sculked down to the spirit hold to get a stolen draught and, in his hurry and trepidation, spilled a quantity of rum, which caught fire from the candle. Happily he was just able to give instant alarm and it was speedily put out, the danger was past ere we knew of it. Our passage up the St. Lawrence was very rough—the wind ahead and constant tacking. At length we reached Grosse Isle, the quarantine station, and were immediately boarded by the authorities. Here first we met with Mr. Watt and his party—a blythe sight—for I had known him in Aberdeenshire. On the second day we reached Quebec, the next morning set sail for Montreal, which we reached in two days more. From there we proceeded up the river to Ottawa, and by the Rideau Canal to Kingston. We reached Kingston on the ninth day after leaving Bytown (Ottawa) and boarded the steamer for Toronto. On Sabbath, 14th August, a bright, beautiful day, we were walking its streets.

The cholera had preceded us, and there had been a great many deaths daily. Unfortunately for us, one of our party, through fatigue and the hardship of the Durham boats, took sick in the inn where we intended to remain. The landlord refused us rooms, pretending that they were all occupied, and we found great difficulty in obtaining lodgings. Next day we rented, by the month, the upper flat of a newly built house on Adelaide street. The most strange and appalling thing to us was the sight of the carts for the dead going their rounds several times a day.

We spent a day or two in looking round the city. The chief streets then were King St., Yonge St. and Bay St. These were of brick, well built and filled up, and in them were handsome shops and extensive warehouses. The other streets, such as Church St., Adelaide St., &c., had large gaps in them, without pavements, and the houses mostly frame.

Having letters of introduction from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Lieutenant Governor Sir J. Colborne, we set out for the Government House and found it to be a large, old, frame building, dingy looking, without any ornament, and situated in a garden surrounded by a high board fence. We entered by a small porch, in which stood the sentry, and were conducted by another soldier into the presence of His Excellency. Sir John Colborne seemed but little past his prime—tall, not burdened with much flesh, his countenance conveying the impression of one accustomed to command, yet frank and open withal. He wore a plain blue surtout, the one sleeve empty and attached to his breast, for he had left the left arm in the Peninsula.

He answered frankly the numerous questions we put to him, and gave a glowing description of the prospects of Upper Canada. He advised us to visit and examine the recently surveyed township of Nottawasaga, receiving from his secretary a note to the chief Surveyor, Mr. Rankin.

In the afternoon I called on Archdeacon Strachan and spent two hours very agreeably with him. Our conversation turned more on Scotland than on Canada and was now and then carried on in the 'guid auld Mither tongue'.

Having seen our families comfortably lodged, a fellow passenger, Mr. William Gibbon, and I took the stage to Newmarket, and thence to Holland Landing. In the morning, we took the steamer, sailing by the western shore

of Lake Simcoe, and keeping close to the wild rice fields which grow luxuriantly on its borders. The noise of our wheels and the snorting of the engine scared large flights of birds that were feeding on the rice. When nearly two-thirds across, and so close to the shore that our wheels were almost clogged by the weeds and rushes, a she bear and two cubs burst from their concealment, scarcely twenty yards from us. Instantly rifles and fowling pieces were brought out, and many shots were fired, but harmlessly for Bruin, who kept dashing along by great bounds, nearly parallel to our course, disappearing among the thick rice, and we saw no more of her. We reached Barrie about one o'clock, and, after resting a while, took the great road through Sunnidale. Here, at least, we met with something new, though, we could scarcely say, pleasant. The road was just brushed, only here and there short detached pieces cut down to the width, and but partially logged; our feet, accustomed to the smooth pavement of the city, were constantly tripping on snags, causing us now and then, an awkward tumble; the afternoon was close, sultry and moist, around us an interminable forest of gigantic pines; and for miles and miles no sign of a house, or flocks, or herds, or human face divine. Lest, however, we should fall asleep, our hands and arms were kept in constant exercise, trying to defend ourselves from clouds of mosquitoes, which till then we had little more than heard of. At last, at nightfall, we reached a rude inn where we put up for the night, making our supper on salt pork and sugarless, creamless, green tea and a certain liquor which they called by courtesy "Canada Whiskey," of which "aqua fortis" was the chief constituent part.

"Aqua fortis as ye please,

He can content ye."—Burns.

Next afternoon we found the headquarters of Mr. Surveyor Rankin, to reach which we had to descend the high bank of the Nottawasaga river—a dull, brown, stagnant stream, so dead that we could not tell in which direction it flowed—to a flat near the water's edge. His summer place was roofed with cedar bark, carpeted with hemlock branches, fronted by a huge, smoky fire, now illuminating the woody banks, and now quenched by the dense smoke, which, suffocating as it was, by putting to flight our tormentors, felt tolerable and even pleasing. The utmost kindness and attention was shown us by Mr. Rankin and he gave us his best room. We sank into a feverish sleep, speedily broken by the awful hum and the tormenting stings, to be succeeded by another short slumber, and again to be rudely roused by the tormentors. And thus passed our first night's bivouac in the forest, on the banks of the Nottawasaga.

The observations of the few days since we left Toronto had satisfied our minds that Nottawasaga Bay was not an eligible sight for our projected colony. We took a good long circuit round the Bay, bathed in it, and left on the third day. A heavy rain had fallen—the weather was much cooler—and our return was much less painful than our outset. We reached Barrie about mid afternoon and, there being no steamer, and we anxious to get to Toronto, we hired a Highlander to take us across in an open flat bottomed boat. After getting over very agreeably one half of the navigation, a thick mist came upon us, about nightfall, and enveloped us so closely that we had no help but to lie to and wait the morning, or at all events, a clear atmosphere. We were quite unprepared for passing a night on the lake—no great coat, no cloak, no blanket, not even a glass of their despised Canadian whiskey. But we were not so badly off as we dreaded, for our boatman had some salt pork and he contrived to get up a fire and boil the pork, and he had some uncouth looking substance in the shape of bread, so that, night coming down on us and mist, we had

really a dainty supper, finished off with green tea infused in the hot water in which the pork had been boiled, of course ornamented with pork beads. Our only pillow was Jacob's—the stones on which he made the fire that had boiled our supper. Without shelter of any kind the night drove heavily along, but about six o'clock next morning the mist evaporated as suddenly as it had come down upon us, and we reached Barrie in time to meet the stage to Toronto, where we arrived in the evening, tired and fagged out enough.

We remained at Toronto a few days, for the sake of rest, in which time we again met Mr. Watt and his relatives. We gave them an account of the late excursion, and our opinion of that part of the country, telling them it was now our intention to go West, to see the Canada Company's Lands, and especially the Huron Tract. Mr. Watt offered to go along with us and we gladly accepted his company.

On the following Monday, Mr. Watt, Mr. William Gibbon and I took the steamer to Niagara, where we arrived in the afternoon. It had then all the appearance of a falling village: the frame buildings, grey and ricketty, few new buildings, scarcely any going up, and no signs of activity or improvement. We took the stage thence to Drummondville, where we remained all night. Next morning we visited the Falls. We stood for a long time with our eyes rivetted upon them, and the longer we gazed the more vast and magnificent they grew. I certainly felt no disappointment, but was quite of the Irishman's opinion, who, on being told that many persons were disappointed when they saw the Falls, exclaimed: "By japers, I don't know how anybody could be disappointed, unless they went to see a river fallin' up." But in truth the Falls must be studied. Every part of the vast amphitheatre is on so grand a scale—their height, their depth, their volume, the boiling surge below, the hills and landscape all around—measure and weigh each particular part in the mind's eye, then with the eye and the mind, and endeavor to comprehend the grand whole—then only will you have some faint idea of the overwhelming magnitude of the panorama before you. To attempt to describe more minutely a scene which any one may now view by a pleasant day's excursion, would be an abuse of the reader's patience and of the Queen's English. We went down the stair to the foot of the fall, and I, as many others have done, attempted to go in between the projecting torrent and the rock, but a mighty rushing wind, driving a dense spray, so blinded and almost choked me that after penetrating about three yards, I was fain to get back. We then ascended and stood on Table Rock, which at that time projected so far as almost to touch the edge of the torrent, so that lying down on my breast and stretching out my arm, I could put my hand in the fall. The look down here, was awful.

We left for Chippewa, and thence took passage in a covered barge of the Welland Canal, to Dunnville. The evening was rainy and all on board had to take shelter in the narrow and crowded space below. Our fellow-passengers seemed all to be Canadian farmers,—old settlers—comfortable looking persons in their grey homespun. Their talk was of the weather, the crops, the prices, the poor markets, the canal and such topics. But what shocked us much was the universal swearing. Though the conversation was carried on in a quiet, calm tone, without anything exciting, every other word was an oath, often a strange one. But we had no help but to sit still and hear it with what patience and resignation we could. At length the long, painful evening came to a close, and we were in Dunnville.

It was dismally dark, the rain pouring down, and what was called the street seemed a mud lake. We plunged through the darkness, occasionally

falling foul of a stump, and got to the chief Inn, where we found every room filled up, the village being crowded with workmen and artisans, employed at the canal and dam. We were told we might perhaps be better accommodated at another house, but we chose to remain and rough it with the rest. We therefore bivouacked on the floor along with many others. We started next morning early to go up the Grand River side to Brantford.

* * * * We reached Brantford late in the afternoon, tired out. We remained there over Sabbath, and on Monday took the stage to Oxford along the London road, and towards evening reached the clearing of the Messrs. W——, in Zorra.

The ground we had gone over since morning was rolling and hilly ; we saw but few streams ; and the long poles with bucket and balance attached to the draw wells showed they were very deep. The Messrs. W—— had the true spirit of backwoodsmen, and talked with pleasure, almost enthusiasm, of their roughings, discomfords, and privation, and of the feeling which their success had inspired. Next morning we started to examine their and the neighboring clearances ; but, oh, how rough and uncouth these irregular, zigzag fence fields seemed to our inexperienced eyes ! The fencing, the stumps, the irregularly cut stubble, about a foot and a half high, the profusion of weeds in the angles of the fences and about the stumps, and the shoots from the stumps, made us wonder how any crop could grow there, or having grown, be taken off or drawn in. And yet the crop had been a rich one, the thick, strong stubble bore witness to its luxuriance, and with all these drawbacks we were told it had exceeded twenty bushels an acre.

The houses, too, were strange and novel ; for, unlike the shanty hovels we saw in Nottawasaga and Sunnidale, they were something like houses ; they had at least a door and two windows in front, and the corners were roughly squared, although the perpendicular and the square were not always rigidly adhered to ; but on the inside, the round, bark-covered logs, the rough chinking (not altogether impervious to the air and light), the huge, wide chimney built of cedar and mortar, the blazing log pile on the hearth, sending the heat to the farthest corners ; the rough deal partition, with its door and wooden latch, the axe hewn stools and tables, alternating sometimes with the round blocks sawn from the trunk of a tree ; the baking kettle covered with live coals ; the rough deal shelves all around with their various utensils ; the strong wooden pegs driven into the logs—these things, though afterwards perfectly familiar to us, were then altogether new, and conveyed to us the idea, not of squalid poverty, but of rude comfort and independence. On mentioning our purpose of settling in a little colony on some favourable situation, all, as may be easily believed, were extremely anxious that we should settle somewhere near them, and pointed out several blocks which they thought might suit our purpose ; but on visiting them, the want of running streams, and especially of one considerable stream, proved an insuperable objection.

We then left, and travelling in the direction pointed out, came upon the road leading through Waterloo, where was a tavern kept by one Freivogel.

* * * *

At Elora, having taken lodging at the tavern, and got some refreshment, which we greatly needed, we enquired for Mr. Gilkison, (the late David Gilkison) and were told that he owned the large log house we had seen on entering the clearance, and kept a store there. We rested a while and then called there, when we learned that he was from home, but was expected to return next day.

From the door of the store we observed that a part of the opposite river bank was cleared, with a small shanty upon it—a saw mill,—beneath which were “the Falls.” We also observed a bridge on a line with the store. We hastened down to the saw mill, which was not then working, being out of repair, and from beneath it got our first view of the Falls, which, notwithstanding our having so lately seen Niagara, appeared to us really magnificent and extremely picturesque. We then returned to our lodgings at Mr. Martin Martin’s. Next morning, finding that Mr. Gilkison had not returned, we resolved to visit Fergus.

We were shown the brush road, the only road leading to it, and on enquiring for Mr. Wilson, who had left Aberdeen some months before us, were told that his clearance was right on our way, and would be the most direct route to Fergus.

We soon got there, and found him in his logging habiliments—picturesque, withal, but certainly not white as snow. We spent an hour very agreeably, and greatly admired the romantic position of his cottage, perched on a projecting ledge of rock, commanding a view of the Grand River, with its steep rocky banks and lofty trees, for a long way up and down—nor less admiring the comfort and even elegance within, embellished with old country ornaments and some wild flowers of the forest. He led us through his chopping, where we first saw the process of logging, into the path to Fergus, near which we met Mr. Webster and two of Mr. Ferguson’s sons, in the light deshabelle common in those days, carrying axes.

On mentioning our object, Mr. Webster said he would be at home in the evening, and would be glad to show us his maps and further our object in any way he could.

We were soon in Fergus, then consisting of a tavern, unfinished; a smithie; two or three workmen’s shanties of the rudest kind; and Mr. Webster’s house, a neat log cottage with the best finished corners, roofing, and windows we had yet seen.

As a matter of course, we went to the tavern, where were workmen in every part of it, fitting up, planing, plastering and chinking. We sauntered about, seeing the little that was to be seen, looking at the dam, the falls, the black pool under the rude half finished bridge, and the stumps wherever there was any clearance, which was mostly confined to the village site; and the banks of the river, which appeared to us much less majestic than at Elora—although the lofty, precipitous, water worn, rocky banks attracted much of our attention. We then went to Mr. Webster’s, and saw the plan of his lands, but found that all the choicest situations, all the lots nearest Fergus, all the lots bordering on the rivers and streams, were already sold; and he had not a block left of any extent nearer than four or five miles from Fergus. On pointing out this to Mr. Webster, he then advised us to examine Mr. Gilkison’s land—that, as far as he knew, very few lots of his had been sold, and we would therefore have the pick of the block and many choice sites on the Irvine and other streams. We then took our leave.

When we entered the tavern in the evening, it was swarming like a hive with artizans, millwrights, and carpenters, together with several young men with capital, sons of Scotch proprietors—mostly intelligent young men from Perthshire, Dumfries, and the south of Scotland; and from all we received a cordial welcome in the genuine Scotch style and in hamely Scotch. On asking if we could be accomodated for the night, “I kenna what ye’ll ca’ accomodated; but ye’ll just get yer share o’ the flure—we’ll no can do mair for ye—an’ yer bite an’ yer sup wi’ the lave”.

The night was very joyous: The novelty of the situation—the rudeness of accomodation—the drollery of the make-shifts—the mixed yet entirely Scotch

character of the society—the hopes upspringing in the breasts of all—imparted a loveliness, a zest, and a joyousness to the conversation such as I have rarely experienced. The hackneyed lines, “The nicht drave on wi’ sangs an’ clatter, An’ aye the yill was growin’ better,” was not on that occasion a poetic fiction, but a literal fact, for, up to that evening I had small liking for “this Canada.”

We returned to Elora next morning, and found Mr. Gilkison, who showed us the map of his lands, pointing out how beautifully they were watered. We therefore resolved to spend the next two days in exploring a part, at least, of them.

Proceeding along the Fergus brush-road between the eleventh and twelfth concessions, we followed it up to the Irvine river, crossing a stream which falls into the Irvine, and diverging occasionally to the right or left to examine the land; thence we came to the stream falling into the Irvine, called, on the earliest maps, “Elmslie water.” Passing on to the north-west, we diverged to the left to see the Beaver Meadow which Mr. Gilkison had told us of, and soon found it—a very beautiful Beaver’s clearance of some acres, covered with natural grass, very thick and tall, studded with shrubs and small trees, whose spreading tops reminded us of “home,” and fringed about with an ugly hedge of brambles, canes, and brakes, though which we now and then had some difficulty in struggling. In looking about this pretty spot we almost lost our bearings, and it cost us some time to recover the “blaze.” Passing onwards as far as lots four and five, we came upon the stream already mentioned, and went up and down its banks a considerable distance the land gently rolling, the trees large, the under-brush thinner than in other places. The sun now descending low, warned us that it was time to return if we would escape a bivouac in the woods.

Next morning we passed on the line between the twelfth and thirteenth concessions, and following the “blaze” we came upon the largest and thickest swamp we had yet seen. We had great difficulty in penetrating it and keeping the blaze, owing to the underwood, the water dammed up, and the fallen trees. After crossing a rivulet we came to the Irvine spreading out to a considerable width—the opposite bank steep and high. Thence we came to the stream at Mr. Michie’s and thence to lots 4 & 5.

As on the day before we spent a considerable time examining the land to right and left, every now and then coming on some small stream. At length in our search we fairly lost the blaze and failing to recover it, we directed our course towards the Irvine, which we came upon, somewhere in the neighborhood of “Doiachar.” Keeping therefore, the west bank, we followed it down holding close to the river; partly because we knew not its windings, and were afraid to lose sight of it, less we might again lose ourselves. We found it in some places spreading out beautifully, with flats sometimes on one side and sometimes on both. Now and then the west bank was lofty and steep even to the water’s edge, and in several places the river was marred and blocked up by accumulations of fallen timber and drift-wood. We thus reached again the line between the 11th. and 12th. concessions, and following it, reached Elora when it was quite dark.

I was now satisfied. We had found a block suitable in all respects for our projected colony. The quality of the soil, as indicated by the trees and their size, was equal to any we had seen; watered in such a manner as we had nowhere seen; the streams living, clear, rapid, and the chief of them on a limestone bed, and therefore healthy; the society was superior to what we could have anticipated—the newer settlers almost entirely Scotch, the older, around and in the neighbourhood of Elora, respectable, intelligent Englishmen; the block bordering on the new and rapidly rising settlement of Fergus, with the immediate prospect of having a Church and Schools; the only draw-

back—far in the woods and the roads execrable. We therefore immediately called on Mr. Gilkison, to ascertain on what terms a block of 2000 or 2500 acres could be purchased. His reply was that he could make no reduction from four dollars per acre, but he referred us to his brother in Toronto, Mr. Archibald Gilkison, who was agent for the estate of his late father. It now only remained that we should hasten to Toronto, which hitherto had been our headquarters, and we set off next morning. Nothing worthy of recording that I can remember, occurred on the journey back to Toronto. Conveyances there were none; as yet stages were not, at least northward from Hamilton; for ten years after that there was only a weekly conveyance by waggon from Guelph, so that we had to perform the whole journey to Hamilton on foot. On arriving at Toronto, we called together our party, ladies included, gave them a description of our travels, and, in particular, of the location we had in view, its appearance and the society, and an eager and almost unanimous wish was expressed to settle there. Mr. Watt alone hesitated; he had visited Whitby, and seemed to have a partiality for it, partly, I believe, because it was not so far back; partly, because he had several old acquaintances settled there; partly, it might be, because, being farther advanced, it would be more advantageous for one with some capital to settle there. The ambitious resolution, however, of his sisters and brother-in-law, Mr. John Keith, at length determined him to cast in his lot with the new colony.

We lost no time in going to Mr. Gilkison and finishing the bargain. He would make no deduction in the price, four dollars per acre, but agreed to allow half a dollar of the price per acre to be expended within the block in cutting roads and making bridges.

We remained in Toronto two or three days to make what arrangements were necessary, and Mr. William Gibbon having gone on the day before to secure waggons, on Friday the —— day of October, we took steamer to Hamilton and landed amid an outpour of rain, through which we proceeded up a street of glutinous mud to Burleigh's tavern. We dined at one common table there and I could perceive that our travelling costumes and drenched appearance caused some surprise as well as amusement to some of the diners.

Mr. Gibbon had engaged six waggons, including a light one for the ladies and children, and, it clearing up after dinner, the cavalcade started.

We made our way but slowly, heavily laden as our teams were, through the sticky paste of the road, or rather, mud canal—to Dundas, whose smooth liquid surface covered many a dangerous hole; but we began to realize the difficulties of our enterprise when we were ascending the hill above Dundas and had come to the flat about half way up the ascent. Here we were brought to a complete standstill; while on our resuming the steep ascent our two foremost teams stuck fast, and neither "geeing" nor "hawing" nor whipping of which there was too much—nor swearing of which there was much more—could move them. The teamsters, therefore, unhitching the horses from the last two waggons, and putting two teams to each waggon in succession, at length slowly and painfully dragged them to the top of the hill. When we came to the road which branched off to Galt, three of the teamsters announced their determination to take that route, as they were sure, they said, their team could not take them through the "short road". The other three said they would venture it. Our party thus separated, some going with the teams by the long route, the rest, including the women and children, taking the direct road to Guelph. We got on less painfully, though with many a "dird" and shake, till we entered the "long woods" where (as it continued for many years) it was just out of one hole into another.

Loud were the complaints, dismal the groanings, dire the swearings, at the mud holes, the heavy loads—at the unhappy immigrants; while, as if to warn us of our approaching fate, we every now and then met with some shattered wheel, some broken axle, or scattered fragments of some unfortunate waggon. We several times, indeed, narrowly escaped the overthrow of our loads, in which case it would have been impossible for us to have reloaded, on account of the depth of the holes and the unstable footing.

Although the tavern we came to was not very inviting we were glad to get its shelter, and ordered supper for the party. The viands were salt pork, some fry, and bread, black, half baked, the centre tough dough. The landlady made her appearance with the excuse that she was out of tea, and had expected it to-night, but it had not come; she, however, had done her best. We had some fragments of bread and meat, the tea was barely tasted and set aside—it was made of some of the Canadian herbs (sassafras it might be, or hemlock); we asked for water, but alas!—it was a solution of lime nearly as white as milk. We had therefore, no help but go to bed—almost supperless. Fatigue and the jolting made us sleep soundly.

The morning was clear, with a heavy, white frost. We started about six o'clock and reached Black's about ten. Here we had the comfort of tea and excellent well cooked viands. We got to Guelph about one p. m., and proceeded about four miles to a crossway of the direst kind, half broken up, with a mud hole at the end which we tried in vain to avoid, but had no help but to plunge into it, and there the waggons stuck fast. The hole being of unknown depth, it was thought useless and even dangerous for the horses to employ the former expedient of doubling the teams. Happily there were two farm houses near, whither we sent for two ox teams, and by means of doubling them and prying with rails we got the waggons drawn without any serious breakage; the oxen drew on to Blyth's—three young men from the west of Scotland who had recently settled there and built an inn. The house was just roofed, partly chinked, the window frames in, but unglazed, the doorway posted up, but without a door. Though the accommodation thus seemed somewhat unpromising we were glad to embrace it, for it would have been madness to have attempted going further by such a broken and wild track; the teamsters, therefore, in African phrase, untrekked.

We entered under the roof, for it was little more than a roof, only one side of the building being chinked, and the blazing log pile diffusing light and warmth soon melted the ice of ceremony. The young men expressing themselves greatly perplexed as to how they could accommodate us, the lassies volunteered to look after the cooking department, and the married ladies to the beds. They were thus set at their ease, and the joke and the laugh went round.

Our servant Elsy greatly amused them by the fun of her jokes and her smart repartees, and we were soon as merry and comfortable a company as persons who had never seen each other until half an hour before could be. To our supper was added the luxury of venison steaks; and the novelty and strangeness of our circumstances, together with the fatigue and roughness of the day, reconciled us even to the Canada punch. The beds of the principal members of the party were spread along the upper floor, and we slept very comfortably.

We left about ten o'clock next morning to accomplish the last stage of our journey, and reached Elora about three p. m., with less obstruction than we expected, our greatest difficulty being within a quarter of a mile of Elora.

In about two hours we had the satisfaction of seeing the teams arrive that had gone the other way—and with no material damage.

Mr. Watt and his party got immediate possession of the shanty on the

north side of the river ; we taking lodgings in the tavern till a house, which had just been raised, should be made ready for us. And here I would gratefully record the courtesy, the kindness and attention shown us by the late David Gilkison, Esq. Warm hearted, intelligent, and having seen a good deal of the world, and with considerable knowledge and experience of Canada, his house and society were an agreeable refuge, and caused many an evening pass pleasantly which otherwise would have dragged heavily ; when any of us needed assistance he was ever as ready to give as we to ask it. His father's purchase here and his own exertion undoubtedly gave the first impulse to the settlement of this flourishing part of Canada West.

As was before mentioned, we took lodgings in the tavern till the house which was preparing for us should be ready for our reception. The landlord, Mr. Martin, and landlady, were exceedingly obliging and attentive, and we were as comfortable as one room, close to the bar-room and serving the manifold purposes of dining-room, bed-room, drawing-room, kitchen and wash house occasionally, and, as it unhappily turned out, hospital also, could allow us to be.

A few days after our arrival Mr. Gilkison had a 'raising,' to which our men were invited. All were willing and even eager to go ; partly to see the (to them) strange sight of putting up a log house. Everything went well till the placing of the uppermost logs, when, by haste or inadvertence, one of them slid and struck down John Robb, one of the handiest of our workmen. When taken up, it was found that his thigh was broken. Mr. Gilkison instantly despatched his man, John Fergusson, on horseback to Guelph, for the Surgeon. Fergusson returned with the Surgeon about eleven o'clock the same night—a wonderfully short space of time, considering the state of the track, for road it could scarcely be called. The fracture was set and bandaged with much difficulty ; and when he returned two or three days afterwards, to dress the wound, he pronounced it to be doing exceedingly well ; and, in the end, his recovery, though somewhat tedious, was effected without much suffering.

The first thing now necessary to be done was to make a practicable road into our new possessions ; it, of course, could only be at first a 'brush' road. The parties who were engaged in making this first road to Bon accord were Messrs. Watt, Mr. John Keith, myself, Mr. William Gibbon, Mr. John Fergusson, and Mr. Sam. Trenholme : the last two were the Engineers and Pioneers. We started from Elora immediately after breakfast, and taking the line between the eleventh and twelfth concessions, by four o'clock in the afternoon completed a very good 'brush' road to the Irvine, making the ford a little above the present bridge. The reasons why we took this line rather than the legal one between the twelfth and thirteenth concessions were : first, because it was nearer Elora and would form the front of our farms ; but secondly, and chiefly, because this line was much easier and freer from obstructions than the other. We had only one or two short detours to make from the line ; the first to avoid the corner of the swamp on the land first purchased by Mr. Robert Gerrie, and vulgarly called 'Robbie's swoggle' ; another short one to the west to avoid the precipitous hill immediately north of Mr. Keith's, and then a slight deflection to the east, into Mr. John Gibbon's lot, to make the most favorable fording place across the Irvine river.

It was now the time to divide our purchase and to apportion the lots to the original Bon-accord settlers. These were Messrs. George Elmslie, Peter Brown, Robert Melvin, William Gibbon, Alexander Watt, John Keith and Miss Watt (afterwards Mrs. George Barron).

(Mr. Elmslie adds the names of George Brown, George Cornwall, William Jamieson and W. Carnegie, who, however, did not come to Canada. A list of those who came to Bon accord will be given in another place).

The lands on the whole block being deemed of equal quality, it was my

chief desire and care to give to each of the settlers, so far as the position of the lots would permit, a share of the running streams. Messrs. Watt and Keith, and Miss Watt, chose their lots on Concession 11, and I agree to it making the reservation of the Beaver Meadow, Lot 10, which I apportioned to Mr. W. Jamieson, whose father-in-law, Mr. James Moir, senior, with his son and two daughters took possession of it in the ensuing year. To Messrs. Melvin and Brown's I assigned the lots on the 13th concession more particularly giving to Mr. Melvin and P. Brown the four lots through the centre of which the Irvine flows; to George Brown the lot later owned by Mr. Brockie, through which runs a fine streamlet. The lots on the 12th concession were reserved by me more particularly. I appropriated for myself Lots 15, 14, 13 and 12. Lot 15 was afterwards purchased from me by Mr. John A. Davidson, in the name of Dr. Sanger, of London, and Lot 14 by Mr. John Gibbon. One half of Lot 11 was purchased by Mr. J. Wedderburn, and on his leaving was taken up by Mr. William Gibbon; the other half of Lot 11 was bought by Duncan Barber.

We now set about clearing, and raising houses. Mr. Watt let thirty acres to be cleared and fenced, at about sixteen dollars an acre, to Messrs. Nicklin and Elkerton, together with cutting and hauling logs for his house. I let ten acres to be chopped at six dollars an acre; five to be cleared and fenced, and two or three acres, around the house to be cleared, but chopped close to the ground, at twenty dollars an acre. This job was taken by William and Richard Everett, and also the cutting and hauling of logs for the house, forty-two by thirty six feet, for which I gave fifty dollars. The remainder was cleared by Mr. Letson.

Sometime about the beginning of November, Mrs. Elmslie, William Gibbon and I, went to select a site for our house. We were not long in finding one—the top of an eminence sloping up from the Irvine, and at about fifty yards from the stream, and rising gradually from Elmslie Water (as we jokingly called it) on the south and at about seventy yards from its bank.

(This was near what is now the residence of Mr. David Scott, who is the present owner of Mr. Elmslie's farm).

On the twentieth and twenty first of November it was raised. Nearly the whole of the then population of Nichol and Woolwich were there. All the first settlers in Nichol, the English settlers in Woolwich, a great many workmen from Fergus, the first settlers on the Upper Irvine, all our choppers, the carpenters from Elora and its immediate neighborhood, old King Reeves, being our waggoner, carrier, purveyor, &c. The first day the work went rather heavily from the extraordinary size and weight of the logs, so that when night fell, it was little more than half up. Nearly all agreed to see it finished on the morrow. Those who were nearest to the scene of action went home; but the night being mild and dry, a great many remained on the spot and, as there was plenty of viands and punch, they made a large fire, and passed the night very comfortably. Next day all went to it with a hearty good will, and considerably before night, the last log was put up, amid tremendous cheering. As Mr. Watt's raising was to be next day, Messrs. Nicklin and Elkerton invited those who were to stay over the night to the shelter of the shanty. The night being cloudy and dark, a great many stayed, so that the shanty was completely crowded: we had scarcely sitting room: and a scene of mirth and fun, and somewhat boisterous play, without brawling ensued, such as I have rarely seen here, even in those early days. It continued till near morning, for there was no sleeping room. Some, however, took shelter under the thick cedars and hemlocks, which were in abundance on the bank. At daylight it began to rain, which, by the middle of the forenoon, changed into a thick fall of snow, and

continued throughout the day, making the work, though far easier than that of the former two days, much more cheerless and uncomfortable. An accident had like to have put an end to my further clearing the forest. The "cornermen" were vieing with each other who should lay his corner most quickly; the falling snow made the axe handles slippery, and the axe of one of them slipped and whizzed past my head with great velocity, almost grazing my cheek. This was one of the providential deliverences I have experienced during my life. The raising was finished early in the afternoon, and we went to our quarters cold and dripping.

About this time we formed a resolution to have Divine Service on Sabbath, at least once in the day. Our first meeting for this purpose, was in the shanty occupied by Mr. Keith, and Mr. Watt, on the north bank of the river, at Elora. Shortly after, Mr. Gillison invited us to his house, where were assembled the villagers, and a few of the nearest settlers. We had the usual exercises--singing, praying, reading the Scriptures, and a sermon, sometimes of Blair's, sometimes of Newton's, sometimes of others. We continued this as long as we remained in the village.

Towards the end of December we got into our new lodgings--the building provided for us being now roofed and chinked, the doorway hung, and the windows in and glazed--things which did not always happen simultaneously in those days. Our beds were arranged in this wise: at about seven feet from the western gable a strong beam was fastened from side to side; this was divided into three compartments by white cotton screens; then boards were placed across, and on these were laid mattresses and beds. This was our common bedroom, partitioned off by a white sheet extending from side to side. Our cooking stove was placed towards the other end, and in the centre our common table, formed of the large chests; trunks and smaller boxes were our seats. Thus situated we felt comparatively comfortable, only at times the hive was too small for the swarm.

On Christmas morn we were serenaded with Christmas carols, sweetly sung, and accompanied by the flute--a greatly more pleasant arousing than the tumultuous noise in a Scotch town.

The leader of the choir, we found, was Mr. Patmore, carpenter, an excellent singer and a good musician; and certainly our absence from home for six months, and our position--a small spot, a

"Lodge in a vast wilderness,
A boundless continuity of shade,"

still roamed by the untutored Indian--greatly enhanced the delight of the concert.

The winter, as we were informed, was unusually mild, the thermometer not often going below zero, and seldom as low as that; there was no very great depth of snow; there had been, moreover, a singularly long and beautiful Indian summer--the former part of it bright, sunny and deliciously warm; toward the close of it, the thick, smoky atmosphere, and the sun rising fiery red and continuing his march until night as if half eclipsed.

Our sojourn was now and then cheered by visits of acquaintances and countrymen from other parts of the province. One of these, a visit from the Davidsons and the late Mr. Geddes from Cox's Creek, together with Mr. Gilkison, was long kept in mind by us as a "Nox Ambrosiana."

Other events came to enliven and amuse us. There was a birth; Mr. Keith's first born, and the first born of the little colony (now Mrs. Connon).

[Jean Keith, who married the late Thomas Connon, was born on the west side of the Grand River, in Elora, on the 19th of March, 1835, and has been a life-long resident].

On one of these occasions we had taken a round by Squire Smith's, Mr. Swan's, Jonathan Swift's and Yankee Miller's; returning by the Elora and Guelph Road, and close on Elora we came upon the mud-hole I have before mentioned. It was full of water and we would gladly have evaded it, but there seemed no possibility of turning it on either side. My companion, therefore, who was driving, shouting loudly to the oxen, and applying the wand pretty sharply, attempted to dash through it, when, with a sudden jerk, the waggon stuck fast. He geed and hawed and hawed and geed, shouting louder and louder still, making therewith divers threatening gesticulations, but in vain—the waggon could not be moved. Aware that my friend liked driving, and, as was natural, thought his own driving better than mine, I stood still without interfering, but looking carefully around and behind to see whether, by going backwards, we might not more easily get forward, and seeing that the driver was nearly exhausted, I said: "Just let me see what I can do." So he handed me the gad, I think not unwillingly. Having noticed, a few yards behind, a part of the wood on our right thinner and not so much encumbered by fallen trees, I jumped into the hole, unloosed the oxen, turned them round, and, attaching the chain to the hind axle drew the waggon back to dry and firm ground. Then, after yoking them in again, I turned into the forest, now and then shaving rather closely the standing trees, and drove them over rotten wood and fallen trees, some of them by no means small, into Elora. I have no doubt that many of the older residents have a very lively remembrance of this same slough at the very entrance to Elora. Our load only consisted of a few bushels of seed wheat and peas.

[The mud-hole described by Mr. Elmslie was about one hundred yards north from the present G. T. R. station.]

In January the snow fell more copiously, but not nearly to the depth of some succeeding years. When the alternations of frost and fresh had hardened and firmed the surface of it, then for the first time we heard the music of the wolves echoing all around every evening and often through the night. One morning, succeeding a night on which their howling had been unusually appalling, and evidently near, a little before sunrise it seemed to come nearer and nearer the shanty; the choppers rushed to the door, and in a minute a pack of between twenty and thirty were seen rushing in full cry after a deer. The deer went direct through the chopping, clearing by great bounds the brush piles and the logs in her way and dashed across the river in the direction of Elora, evidently gaining upon them. The next morning, the ice being bearing, one of our party, wishing to see the banks of the river above, proceeded upwards for about half a mile and came upon a deer run down and slaughtered but recently, for it was not yet cold. It was a good deal torn and mangled especially in the throat and hips but not much devoured. The choppers conjectured that it was the same deer they had seen driven through the chopping, that the wolves had dogged it all the time, giving it no rest, and at length had driven it on the river, the ice was covered with but a light sprinkling of snow, and on this treacherous surface the poor baited deer was soon within the fangs of its merciless pursuers. It had made a desperate struggle, and the surface all round was imprinted by the tracks of many broad paws. Their prey had scarcely fallen when they were frightened from it, for, as has been said, but little of it was devoured; and we supposed that it was either the fall of a large

tree, or the sound of the carpenters hammering on the roof of the house, heard in the calm severity of the frosty morning that had scared them from their banquet, hardly won and scarce tasted.

In conjunction with the subject of wolves, I may relate some of the losses we sustained by them. The first was a valuable cow and our first cow; it occurred about fifteen months after this adventure. That winter and spring had in all respects been a complete contrast to our first. On the 16th of November the thermometer stood more than 20 degrees below Zero, and the snow had fallen to the depth of two feet and in the course of the winter covered the stumps. I well remember on that morning the strange stinging feeling on touching anything; another phenomenon was seen—when we raised the cup to our lips the saucer followed, although the apartment was closely chinked and there was a large log fire blazing on the hearth. The feeling reminded me of Milton's description of the cold of the infernal regions—"The parched ground burned froze, and cold performed the effect of fire." The cow had calved a few days before, the morning was bright and warm, the snow was nearly gone, and blades of green herbage were beginning to peep out. Led on by this she strayed into the neighbouring lot, Mr. Fraser's, where she got into a small swamp and stuck, and being weak was unable to extricate herself. The wolves found her out and came upon her in the early part of the night. A settler, lately came up, who was lodging in a small house not far from the spot, described the triumphant yells of the savage brutes combined with the bellowing and wailing of the poor suffering cow, as the most frightful and appalling sounds he had ever heard and he dared not venture out. In the morning our man brought home all that remained of her—the bell and the strap. I have sustained many losses; to some of which this was but a feather in the scale to a ton, but never any by which I was so much moved; it was in vain that we endeavored to restrain our tears. We left the carcass untouched, and a few volunteered to watch for the next two nights. The first night was very dark, and about midnight they came so near that their tread could be heard among the leaves; but either they had scented some thing else besides the carcass, or some incautious sound had given them alarm, so that in a minute they were heard scampering off, not giving the watchers a chance of a shot. The next watchers heard not a sound during the live long night.

About two years after when we had got the small clearance around the house completely fenced and sown in grass, to save the labor and loss of time and vexation—for even after hours' search we not unfrequently came home without them—in hunting up the cattle, we regularly shut them up in this small field. One night about the end of June we were aroused by the noise of the rushing of the cattle, the ringing of their bells, and an occasional bellow. Starting up I hastened to the door. There was just a faint streak of dawn; and I could just see the whole of them, including two yoke of oxen, four cows, calves and sheep, rushing round in the wildest manner. On my appearance they became still; I ran hastily down the park towards the river, and, as I went, heard the splash of many feet rushing through the water. I immediately came upon a ewe stretched out, bleeding much, and evidently dying; a little farther on I came upon another severely wounded, and breathing hard, and then upon a third, not much hurt as it could sit up and soon after rose. By this time the men came to my assistance, and we took the wounded animals to a shanty behind the house. For the first one we could do nothing, it was dead. We dressed as well as we could the wounds of the second, and under the care of our skilful neighbour, Mr. Fraser, it recovered in a few days. The third had escaped with a scratch.

My last loss by the Wolves happened about a year and a half after this. Our saw-mill dam, which was ever breaking out and swallowing up the profits, and something more, in costs of repair—a constant grievance and vexation—so that I was sometimes tempted to join in the joking anathema of a humourous neighbour, (—Mr. Mair—)—“that d——d dam” had burst out in the midst of a press of work, and we had a “bee” of the settlement to repair it—a hard days work which we finished as darkness came on—and as the work was voluntary we had a feast in the evening. Just as the workmen had gone it began to rain heavily, and I asked the men whether the sheep had been shut up. In the hurry and confusion they had been forgotten. I seized the lantern and hurried out, but when I had gone a little way down the slope, I encountered such a storm of wind and rain that my light was extinguished and I had to grope my way back to the house in intense darkness. In the morning we found three sheep killed and nearly devoured.

For several years I observed that whatever intervals might have occurred, if by any chance or inadvertence sheep were left out, they were sure to be taken—plainly showing that the wolves were ever prowling in the very midst of us; though they never, so far as I am aware, took sheep or calves by day. It was strange too, that though most of the settlers were daily in the woods seeking cattle, not one of them, so far as I have ever heard, ever caught a glimpse of a wolf. It was clear that their habitual cowardice was never to be lulled to sleep. Occasionally, but very rarely, a bear might be seen stalking along, as once was by my daughter between my house and her uncle’s (a distance of scarce a quarter of a mile) which stopped and gazed on her for about a minute, and then walked slowly away; but a wolf never showed himself. I have heard their yells, coming nearer and nearer, and, in a minute or two afterwards, detected the sound of their tread among the leaves, but none ever came nearer. We have some times hunted and killed a racoon, which had committed sad havoc among our crops; and now and then unearthed and killed a groundhog, but these were the greatest of our hunting exploits. In the earlier years of our settlement a very beautiful animal, the flying squirrel, was sometimes brought in by the cat. Its light silvery gray color, and soft velvety fur, with its “wings,” a furry membrane extending from the shoulder to the thigh, expanding in its leap or flight, made us think it the prettiest and most wonderful little creature we had ever seen.

Little else occurred during our first winter’s abode in Canada, worth chronicling. I went pretty regularly to oversee the carpenters’ operations at the house, coming back to Elora in the evening. Having chinked and partitioned off a part of the house, we removed to it, with all our impedimenta, in the beginning of April—that year a most lovely month, mild and warm, with very mild frosts at night, the forest budding and leafing with amazing rapidity, and Mrs. Elmslie and I, and the servant, contrived to make some excellent maple molasses. We were not prepared for making sugar, and all the other hands were fully employed. But the molasses and milk were a delicious addition to our fare.

We now had letters from our intended fellow settlers, telling us that they were to sail in the beginning of April, by New York, and hoping to be with us by the middle of June, mentioning also some additions to our colony. I therefore urged on with all my might the small clearings I had engaged to get done for Messrs Melvine and Peter Brown. No additional hands could be got; it was the end of May ere we could put the seed in the small clearances we could make for ourselves; and it will be seen in the sequel that they had better not been sown. This spring I first took a share in logging—as well as I could. It

was hard work, and I first feelingly understood the Scriptural allusion to the 'laborer watching for the setting sun.' After four o'clock, the day still hot, and my ankles sore with the unwonted straining, I often looked wisely to the sun.

I had just got finished the two or three acres for my friends, when we got word that they were on the way up, and would be with us to-morrow. Next afternoon I set out and met them about a mile below Mr. Reynolds'. The meeting was joyful on both sides; though wearied out and travel sore, and sadly bitten, I was glad to see no signs of discouragement—least of all in the ladies.

It may be easily supposed that after so long a separation and so many adventures by sea and land we were at no loss for topics of discourse; an uninterrupted fire of questions was kept up by me for the greater part of the road, which contributed greatly to enliven the jaded travellers. We got tolerably well over the road and even through the Elora slough till we came to "Robbie's swoggle" where one of the waggons stuck fast, and as the sun was set had to be left behind; while one of the ladies who was walking, left a shoe in the mud which could not be recovered. In about half an hour the whole cavalcade reached Irvinebank where the welcomes and congratulations were renewed. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Melvine, their child, and a man and woman servant; Mr. and Mrs. Peter Brown, six children and a maid servant; Mr. Moir, Sr., his son James, and two daughters; Mr. George Davidson, afterwards Sheriff, making with our own family, &c., about thirty individuals. Next day we rested and on the following day I accompanied the gentlemen to show them their several lots.

I ought to have mentioned that old Mr. Moir stayed in Elora the first night being greatly fatigued. Next morning I perceived a stranger coming through the log heaps, and I was told it was Mr. Moir senior. I went across the burn to meet him and got a right Aberdonian salutation: "Hech man, this is a rough cuntrye."

Among those who joined our colony and came out with this party in June, I omitted to mention Mr. John A. Davidson, who became a useful settler, as well as being an intelligent and agreeable companion, and who lodged with us a considerable time—as did also Mr. Moir senior, with his son and daughters, who remained under our roof till their own house was made habitable.

The newly arrived immigrants were immediately engaged in putting in what crops might yet be sown, in choosing sites for houses, building temporary shanties, &c., Mr. Melvine contracted with the late Mr. Charles Allan for putting up a large frame house, the first frame house on the north side of the Grand River and which he just entered to die. Mr. Moir's house was raised about the end of Summer; the supper after raising was spread on the ground; and it was then that for the first time I heard "The Highland Sergeant," sung by Mr. James Moir, Jr., and all present were convulsed with laughter. Darkness surprised us ere all the impedimenta were gathered together, and we went home by the light of cedar torches, making the woods ring, and the owl complain of being disturbed, for the first time, in her "ancient and solitary reign." How cheering was the shout and song and laughter of young men and maidens compared with the music we had been serenaded by during the past winter and spring—the yelling of wolves.

There was a good crop of wild grass in the Beaver Meadow; we resolved to cut and house it. There was not a large quantity, but it turned out to be of great service during the ensuing severe winter.

In the middle of July we heard of the arrival of Mr. Smith (seedsman) and family, and their settlement at Cox's Creek. Being known to several of our settlers, some of us determined to go and see them as well as other settlers in that neighborhood. Being in want of some necessaries from Shoemaker's mill we drove down in our ox waggon there and visited our friends on our return, getting a good deal of interesting news of our friends in Aberdeenshire. Mr. Smith brought me the happy intelligence that my elder sister, Mrs. John Gibbon with her family, accompanied by my younger, would be with us sometime in September. We had no letter from them lately and letters at that time were from two to three months in reaching us. One I had took five months, having by some mistake gone round by Nova Scotia. That day was the 31st of July bright and warm, but the evening was unusually chilly. Next morning, the 1st of August, was a severe frost—the fields white with hoar frost all over—the ice nearly a quarter of an inch thick on the water-trough—potatoes, melons, tomatoes, everything was cut down; and of course the late sown wheat, as ours was, shared the same fate. Mr. Smith was appalled: like ourselves not anticipating this he had sown some rare vegetables, and all were destroyed by this untimely frost. When we returned home I found that my worst fears regarding the frost were realized. The crops which but a few days before we left looking so rich and luxuriant were stricken down—the potatoes blackened, the wheat a sickly pale yellow, in a word our first crop was destroyed. I had often heard it objected to Nichol and the adjoining townships that they were so liable to frosts that there was no certainty of any crop coming to maturity; and this mischance seemed to confirm the statement. I therefore took pains to ascertain whether the ravages of this frost were confined to the northern part of the "Gore" district. I found that its ravages were universal, extending over Lower as well as Upper Canada, respecting Niagara and Sandwich as little as Nichol and Woolwich; destroying whatever was destructible in the New England States, and felt even to the Northern line of Virginia.

Worthless as our wheat was, we were fain to cut it down for the sake of the straw; and though we were told by the "old" settlers that cattle would thrive on straw and "browst" almost as well as on turnips and hay, our working oxen were reduced to such a state of weakness, notwithstanding the abundance of "browst" that one of them fell down by the way on our return from Fergus with a small load, and we were unable to raise him till we got a warm mash at John Mason's. We got him home with difficulty, and by getting at an enormous price a small additional quantity of hay brought them through the remainder of the winter.

I now got word from my sisters that they had reached Montreal in safety and would proceed to Hamilton without delay. I went down to meet them. It so happened that I timed my journey most exactly. The very next morning after reaching Hamilton I went to the steamer and found them standing on the deck, and if my memory serves me right, Mr. Wm. Tytler along with them. I cannot describe our meeting; it may easily be supposed it was joyful and affectionate. I instantly procured teams and the same afternoon we were on our way to Nichol. The roads were not yet broken up by the "Fall" rains, and were perhaps in their best state, so that our journey was without accident. We had plenty of amusement by the way—the surprise expressed by the boys at the strange and new scenes—Mr. Gibbon's horror of "corduroy," his humorous and graphic descriptions of ship scenes and ship annoyances, in particular his relation of the sufferings of a "Garrioch" man, described in the genuine Garrioch vernacular, rich, racy and eloquent—these, with news of our near relations and friends, Aberdeen gossip, and of the eagerness with which any intelligence from the new "Bon accord" colony, was sought out—made the long rough road seem

short, and diverted the minds of the travellers, inexperienced of Canadian roads, from the many jolts and shakes and thumps they had to bear.

When we got to Irvinebank it was quickly arranged by the 'womankind' that my sisters and family should winter under our roof. Our servant Elsie was tired of the backwoods, and of service in our house, for she said it was as bad as any tavern and worse than some at home for we had not the conveniences. We were thus enabled to let her go. Soon after, Mr. Moir and family moved to their house in the meadow—"the back o' the world" as the old man familiarly termed it. Their company had been a great pleasure to us and, in several respects, a help. We had, ever since they came, nightly concerts of sacred and common music, on fine evenings on the log steps of the front door, overlooking the clearance—in unfavorable weather in the kitchen. These were attended by several of the neighbours, especially by Mr. Peter Brown, who greatly delighted in them. Nor have any of us forgotten or can forget those evenings. Mr. Brown spoke of them with rapture when I saw him in Aberdeen seventeen years later.

The Winter was now approaching, and we had to prepare for it by thoroughly chinking the house and plastering a part of it. Lime could not be got; we had therefore to manufacture it. We dug an excavation in the slope of the bank near the Irvine about twenty-two feet by sixteen, and about ten feet deep at the back where it was deepest. There was abundance of logs above and around it: we had thus only to select or cut the logs to the required length. Limestone lay all about on the surface, and we drew it, the smaller pieces in the waggon and the larger (for the chimney of the house) on a rude sleigh or hurdle. When a considerable quantity of the stones had been sufficiently broken we began to lay a tier of logs in the bottom of the excavation, leaving a square opening in the centre. We then placed a layer of limestone upon the first tier of logs, and then another tier of logs until we thought them of a sufficient height. We had not much labor in placing the logs, as they lay above the pile, so that we had only to take care that they did not roll too fast, and to see that the front log was properly secured. We raised the pile to about twelve feet in height. When set on fire it made a vast blaze, at night illuminating the forest far and wide and so bright that we could see not only the outlines of the trees but the leaves and branches. We kept rolling in logs as the pile burned away and in four or five days had a large quantity of excellent lime.

The most pressing business now on hand was the building of the chimney, and as we intended having four fireplaces—two above and two below—it required to be a considerable building; when finished it formed a large gable. The materials were now nearly all on the spot, and I had secured the builders. These were Messrs. Tytler, Lilly, and Kennedy—"Upright Kennedy," the appellation by which he was long known. The weather was favourable for the first few days, but it afterward broke and became excessively rainy, when our situation became very uncomfortable. We could have no fire in the house and our only substitute was a board shanty open in front, in which all our precautions could not prevent the fire from being not seldom dashed out by the excessive rains. If the situation of the inmates was comfortless, that of the builders and hodmen was more so; but we were obliged to persevere till at the end of nearly three weeks our labours were ended.

It was during this interval that one Sabbath evening, just as we were retiring to bed, Mr. Mair, accompanied by Mr. William Mackie unexpectedly came in upon us. I had heard from Mr. Brown, who had assigned to Mr. Mair one of his lots, of his intended coming; our meeting therefore, though at the moment unexpected, was most cordial on both sides. They remained with us that night, and next morning I accompanied them to Mr. Brown's. Mr. Mair,

with characteristic energy, set about building a shanty, and was able in a few days to bring up his family ; one girl only, not so robust as the rest, was left in Elora. Mr. Brown and I, having occasion to go to Elora on the succeeding Saturday were requested by Mrs. Mair to conduct her home. The forepart of the day was fair, but in the afternoon it rained heavily and the state of the road was—indescribable. We endeavoured at first to pick our footsteps, but it was useless, and we had to flounder on through mud and pool, as best we could, till we came to Irvinebank. But how get over the brook in front of the house ? There was yet no bridge : a large cedar, fallen across the stream was the only pathway for foot passengers ; it was now quite dark, and the brook swollen by the rains. We dared not venture upon the tree in the darkness, so half leading half carrying Miss Mair we got through the stream with no other damage than drenched limbs. But oh ! miserable reception for a young lady just come from Britain—tired out and drenched from head to foot. There was not a fire in the house, and the shanty fire was drowned out by the rains. Fortunately there remained a little warm water, and Mrs. Elmslie, washing and drying her as well as she could, hurried her to bed. Such was Miss Mair's first introduction to Bon-accord.

The winter was now approaching, and the heavy rains and cold nights gave indications of a severe one. With all our means and appliances, and with abundance of warm clothing, we were but indifferently prepared for it. The best that could be said of our houses and shanties was that they would shelter us from the violence of the storms, and that they were uncomfortable ; our crops had perished ; and we had to weather another year on the interest of our little capital. Yet we were not discouraged : we had agreeable and intelligent society ; and our new and isolated situation had increased friendship to attachment, and attachment to love. There were no jealousies, no backbitings, and no quarrels. If unwonted roughness and privations engendered a temporary fretfulness it was speedily soothed down and made a source of amusement. We were, as was afterwards said by several of us—"as one family." But an event was at hand which saddened us all and threw a gloom over the young settlement—the death of Mr. Melvine.

His constitution was feeble, with a hereditary tendency to consumption. From all that was then known of the climate of Canada, his physician judged that emigration there would be favorable to his health. He appeared and felt invigorated by the sea voyage, and during the summer he entered with eager interest into his new plans and labours ; but the unfavorable weather of the Fall seemed to affect his spirits, and he occasionally appeared more irritable than he was formerly wont to do—the effect no doubt of lurking disease within. It was necessary to run our side-lines ; the morning when the surveyor came up was raw and drizzly, and he and I, as had been agreed on, accompanied him. He was very lightly dressed ; I in pilot cloth ; and I urged him to put on at least a great coat, but he declined doing this. It continued wet throughout the day and we finished our survey by five o'clock p. m., drenched and fatigued. A volunteer Rifle Company had been formed at Fergus and he and I joined it. We were called out to drill on a Saturday. The day turned out fine and we walked down together. He seemed in his usual health, appeared in no way fatigued by the walk, but was more silent than was his wont. During the exercises I observed that he once or twice retired ; and at the conclusion I missed him. The unusual exercise and exposure had brought on an affection of the lungs. He said it was nothing—"It came upon him sometimes—but soon went away—he felt quite well, but only a little fatigued with the long walk and the running." He sat a few minutes and we then walked home. The shanty being now very damp, by great exertion on the part of the workmen one

end of the new house was comfortably fitted up, and he was removed there, only to leave it for the tomb. The very night after his removal the unfavorable symptoms recurred. Dr. Craigie had been sent for, and he soon arrived—only to pronounce the fatal words, “No hope.” * * * * *

Mr. Webster sent his horses to take the body to Fergus. The day of the funeral was intensely cold, and the snow about sixteen inches deep. It was indeed in every way a very dismal day to all.

Thus passed away, in his 31st year, the friend and companion of my boyhood and youth. * * * * *

I have been more diffuse in my account of the illness and death of Mr. Melvine because I reckon him one of the chief founders of Bonaccord; for without his presence and co-operation I would never have entered on the undertaking.

Shortly after this the Fergus grist mill was burnt to the ground, not long after its completion. This was not only a heavy private loss, but a grievous public calamity. A considerable quantity of wheat and other grain, together with a number of bags, was destroyed in the conflagration. It caused a grievous scarcity, almost a famine. I was a sufferer among many others. I had purchased a quantity of wheat for provisions and seed, and had sent it to the mill, in new bags brought out to me by Mr. Gibbon. All was lost, and I had nothing remaining but a quantity of wheat of a fair quality but damply got in, huttet not housed, for as yet we had no barn. Meantime I was able to purchase some barrels of flour, which I sold out among my necessitous neighbors, so that it did not last long—I could not keep it while my fellow settlers were in distress. There was no grist mill nearer than Shoemaker’s, a distance of about twenty miles. Urged by necessity my neighbour Mr. James Moir, jr. and I resolved to go down together. We set off early in the morning with our oxen, (two yokes of oxen hitched to one sleigh,) and by evening reached Cox’s Creek, where we staid over night, and reached Shoemaker’s by noon of the following day. When we showed our wheat to our utter consternation he refused to grind it. We urged our necessity and the need of our neighbours; but he answered that he dared not put it through the bolt as it would completely unfit the mill for grinding any more. But he offered to chop it, which would give us all the substance of the wheat, though it would not bake well. He advised us however to take it home again and dry it, in which case it would make very fair flour. Thinking that I might in some way or other shift the difficulty I tied up my bags and replaced them in the sleigh, but my neighbour could not wait, and had his grain chopped. We then returned to Cox’s Creek, whence we started next morning and got home by ten o’clock in the evening of an intensely frosty night. I returning after three day’s travel, just as I went away—he with his wheat not ground but chopped. When, some considerable time after, we were talking over our bootless journey, I asked him how they managed with their “chop.” The answer was brief—“Oh man! but it was tough eatin’.

This winter, began in severity, continued severe throughout, with frequent and heavy falls of snow and tremendous frosts. One morning, at sunrise, I found the mercury compressed within the bulb. It was one of Ramage’s instruments and marked to thirty degrees below zero; it was on the north side of the house in the open air, unsheltered. The severity continued unmitigated till April, when Spring instantaneously burst in upon us. On Sabbath morning I went into the woods for the cattle—the trees were as bare as in January—you could have seen any distance in the forest. On the succeeding Thursday they were one mass of green foliage, and you could not see beyond the edge of the wood; no snow but in the hollows, and the ground covered with a profusion of leeks and myriads of little flowers.

Not a few fatal accidents occurred in chopping; three of them within two or three miles of us. In one of them the cause was singular. Two young men were chopping a large tree—in order to fell it in the desired direction they cut a sapling, fixed it as a “pry” or lever, and continued chopping. Either from the strokes, or from a wavy motion in the tree, the lever suddenly sprung, struck the young man in the forehead, and he fell as if shot, never uttering a sound.

I have alluded to the toil, loss of time, and vexations and losses caused us by the cattle when they did not return home regularly. I think it was towards the end of the summer of 1837, that the cows and oxen had not come home for three days. I knew pretty nearly the direction in which they had gone during the season—they had a large sonorous bell, the sound of which was familiar to me, and I made no doubt of finding them. I started about six o'clock, and made for the “meadow,” as we called Mr. Moir's lot, stopping occasionally, as I went, to listen for the bell. The family were at breakfast, and Mr. Moir pressed me to share with them. I declined, saying I expected to be home to breakfast. “An ye get hame to breakfast it 'ill be a late ane. We heard your bell last afternoon, and it was gae far awa, and we have na heard it the day. Ye'll best take meat whan it's in yer offer.” Happily for me, I took the advice. They then directed me to go a good way west, and afterwards, if I did not hear the bell, to keep south. Having gone a long way in the direction pointed out, stopping, however, frequently to listen for the bell, I came upon a stream, which I knew to be the stream that flowed in front of our house. I now made up my mind to go a good way further, in the same direction, and if I heard no sound, to return to the stream and go home by its banks. I went on, as I thought a long way, till I came to a pretty high eminence which must have been west or south-west of what is now Alma, on the summit of which I stood still and listened. No sound of any kind reached my ears—there was not even the whisper of a zephyr, and it was past noon. After some time, I came upon the stream, and I believed our stream, and kept down its banks; now and then fancying I heard a faint tinkle, and stopping. I went on thus for a long time, till I felt sure I must be in the immediate neighbourhood of Mr. Moir's meadow; but there was no sign of any clearance, the forest before me thick and dark. I looked towards the sun, and then to the direction of the stream; it was running south west instead of north-east. I had taken the wrong stream—that one which, coming at one point within forty or fifty yards of ‘our’ stream, takes suddenly an opposite course, and falls into the Grand River, about four miles below Elora—in short the stream which misled the hapless Andrew Dalgarno.

(Andrew Dalgarno, was lost on this creek, for three days, in August, 1836.)

I lay down on the bank, and debated with myself whether I should attempt my way direct home through the woods, or follow the stream down to the Grand River. I resolved on the latter course. I felt sure I would reach it before darkness came on, and then the way, though long, would be plain. I kept rigidly to the bank of the stream till I came to a clearance; it was a large beaver meadow; and keeping to the stream, I had to press through a thicket of brambles, gooseberry and raspberry bushes. At length I got through it and travelled through a beautiful contry, undulating and knolly, with many a little rill running into the stream whose bank I was following. Tired and exhausted, I lay down about mid-afternoon by the side of one of these rills and drank; but I had not patience to rest. I got up, hastened on, and found the ground steadily descending. After a while I felt completely exhausted, and was compelled to lie down. As I lay I heard the faint sound, as I thought, of rushing

water ; I started to my feet—it was so, I ran forward about fifty or sixty yards. There, a little way below, was the Grand River—and it was time—the sun was setting.

In this abrupt manner Mr. Elmslie closes his narrative. We are left to conjecture, as we may, how he returned to his home. We see him in our imagination carefully fording the Grand River, near what is now the favorite picnic ground of “Whitelaw’s Flats.” Arriving safely, after much trepidation, on the east bank of the river he would soon reach the river road, and following that to the north, would stumble forward in his final effort to reach that haven for many a tired traveller—Old King Reeve’s Place. Here he would be welcomed and, after a rest, and some refreshment, which he sorely needed, Old King Reeves would hitch up his team of horses, which are said to have been the first horses hereabouts, and drive Mr. Elmslie to his home, passing, on their way, through Elora.

As mentioned by Mr. Elmslie, the settlers for the Bon-accord came in parties, relatives and friends following each other at intervals, and all from Aberdeenshire. We now propose to give the names of the first settlers in something like the order in which they came to the settlement. Seventy years have passed since those hardy settlers left home and comfort to face unknown hardships in the bush and as we look over their names to-day we find that in the Bon-accord settlement, in Upper Nichol, there are only two farms now owned by sons of the original owners. These are the farms which were taken up by Mr. Watt and Mr. Keith.

* * * *

John Keith was born at the farm of Kinknockie, in the Parish of Old Deer, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, on the 12th. of January, 1809. When a young man he learned the trade of carpenter and cabinet maker at Stùartfield, about four miles from his home, and, in 1832, while assisting at the building of a Manse at Auchreddie, in the adjoining parish of New Deer, he became acquainted with Alexander Watt and his sisters. This led to his marriage on the 23rd. of May, 1834, with Christian Watt, and to their emigration to Canada. They first met with Mr. Elmslie at Grosse Isle, near Quebec, when on their voyage out, and again, at Toronto where they decided to cast in their lot with the Bon-accord colony.

On their arrival in Elora they found that the only available shelter was a log house on the west side of the river ; the one which Henry Wilbee had built the year before to be used by him while he was building the first saw-mill at the Elora Falls. The party of four—Mr. and Mrs. Keith, Mr. and Miss Watt—took possession of this ; Mr. Keith opened his ‘Kist’, or Kit of Tools, and soon made the house very comfortable for the approaching winter. Having provided a home, Mr. Keith then did the carpenter work on Mr. Elmslie’s house, afterwards on Mr. Watt’s and his own. Men were hired to make a clearing on the farm which he chose, which was Lot 15, on the 11th. Concession. By spring time a log house was built ; to one end of it was an extension which he used as his workshop ; out of the trees growing about him making many necessary articles for himself and his neighbours. As we turn the pages of his old account book we see the record of his work. In many of the accounts the first items mentioned are a window sash, a water-pail, a table, a wash tub or a churn. But there is a great variety, for the list includes spinning-wheels, threshing-mills, lanterns, clock-cases, cradles and coffins.

Mr. Keith assisted at the building of the first Grist Mill in Elora, in 1843, and afterwards built several houses in the village which are in use to day. monuments to his good workmanship.