

No article No-31 was published

THE COBOURG WORLD, THURSDAY, AUGUST 15th., 1935.

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BASKET**

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20c a quart.

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Market

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0 cents; yellow
25 cents, and
y Wonder beans
cents a quart.
were 15 cents for

Grafton Historical Notes

(32)

By T. R. M.

In May 1832 a young Englishman, Thomas Need, by name disembarked at New York on his way to Upper Canada. An Oxford graduate, well supplied with capital, he had decided to try his fortunes in British North America, a part of the New World that was becoming well known to the Britisher through immigrant literature. After making tours of inspection through the Niagara peninsula, and into Seymour Township he finally purchased land in the Township of Verulam, where he lived until his return to England in 1837. The extracts from his journal, published under the title "Six years in the Bush" provide one of the most entertaining contemporary accounts of the Upper Canadian immigrant, and well repay careful reading. Need was an acute observer, and his comments on men and events are both interesting and discerning. Although his little book deals mainly with the Rice Lake country yet he has several references to Cobourg, three of which we reproduce below:—

"A steam-boat conveyed me to Cobourg, on the last day of October, where a heavy fall of rain and snow detained me a couple of days. An inn in a village or small market town is but a dreary refuge on a wet day in England; but on this side of the Atlantic, where the guests' time and habits are subject to fixed rules, it is almost insupportable. At half-past seven in the morning, a loud bell gave notice that all who intended to breakfast should bestir themselves immediately; at eight, a repetition of the summons was instantly responded to by a general rush from all parts of the house and the neighbouring stores; for well the American, whether Yankee or Canadian, knows, that on these occasions

'No room for later wight is found'.

Instantly the work of destruction commenced—plates rattled—cups and saucers flew about, and knives and forks found their way indifferently, into their owners' mouths or the various dishes on the table:— there was

backwoods' settler, just dismounted from his waggon:—opposite to him, with his hat on, an amusing contrast—a little prim, puritanical store-keeper, with well-brushed clothes, sleek countenance and straight greasy hair. Ten minutes sufficed for the dispatch of the meal; after which, each and all retired in silence and haste as they had entered, stopping, however, as they passed the bar, for the never-falling dram and cigar, which concludes the business.

At one o'clock the same bell rang for dinner. The post of honour at this meal was occupied by our despotic host in person, who dealt out a 'Benjamin's mess' to each hungry expectant:—puddings and creams succeeded the substantials which were conveyed to the mouths of the different guests with frightful rapidity, on the blades of sharp dirty knives. I ventured to ask for a spoon, a request which only drew from 'Miss' a disdainful toss of the head, accompanied by the exclamation of "my! if the man be'ent wanting a spoon now? There was no conversation; and as soon as nature was untrussed, the dinner bolters severally rose from table and quitted the room. — I applied to my host for a book. This extorted a murmur against the 'old country people' who could not smoke their cigar in quiet; but after a while he produced a volume of Johnson's Dictionary, and a 'History of the United States, by an American': he had somewhere besides a volume of Extracts from various English authors, published at Boston, under the imposing title of 'British Classics', but this was not forthcoming. These books are the staple, I afterwards found, of most North American Inns."

Later in the year Need partially revised his opinion of Cobourg—"A friend offered me a seat in his sleigh, to Cobourg, where he was going to attend a ball. I gladly accepted the proposal, and found myself amply repaid for the trouble, by a lively dance, good music, and excellent sup-

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 ; peas 25c basket;
 Greengages 35c
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America, a part of the New World that was becoming well known to the Britisher through immigrant literature. After making tours of inspection through the Niagara peninsula, and into Seymour Township he finally purchased land in the Township of Verulam, where he lived until his return to England in 1837. The extracts from his journal, published under the title "Six years in the Bush" provide one of the most entertaining contemporary accounts of the Upper Canadian immigrant, and well repay careful reading. Need was an acute observer, and his comments on men and events are both interesting and discerning. Although his little book deals mainly with the Rice Lake country yet he has several references to Cobourg, three of which we reproduce below:—

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'No room for lated wight is found'. Instantly the work of destruction commenced—plates rattled—cups and saucers flew about, and knives and forks found their way indifferently, into their owners' mouths or the various dishes on the table:—there was little talking and less ceremony—I say Miss', (to the lady in waiting) 'please some tea'—or, 'I say Mister', (to me) 'some steak, I guess I likes it pretty rawish', being the extent of both. The meal was composed of tea, coffee, toast, and bread and the never failing buck-wheat cakes, with a variety of sweet-meats, crowned with a 'piece de resistance' in the shape of a huge greasy dish of beef steaks and onions.

The company was of a motley description, Yankees and emigrants, washed and unwashed, store-keepers, travellers and farmers. At the top of the table, enveloped in sundry great coats, sat a large unshaved

hair. Ten minutes sufficed for the dispatch of the meal; after which, each and all retired in silence and haste as they had entered, stopping, however, as they passed the bar, for the never-falling drain and cigar, which concludes the business.

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Again he writes: "Our first halting place was Cobourg, a small but rapidly increasing town. - - - A stage passes through the town dally and steamboats always touch. It has also a post-office, two bank agencies, several good stores and private houses, and is in many respects a desirable place to settle near."

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