

emigration movement had only good to say. The *Peruvian* belonged to the Allan Line, a shipping company started through the enterprise of a Glaswegian shipmaster Captain Alexander Allan. Most of the children who went to Canada travelled on ships belonging to his company. Captain Smith of the *Peruvian* evidently had a particular fondness for children. He had captained the ship in which Maria Rye had taken out her first party of little girls. Some of the lads gave Annie an anxious time, and she was especially worried by the 'evil examples shown my poor lads by the gentlemen of the cabin, with their smoking, drinking and ribaldry of song'. Captain Smith helped to keep the boys occupied by giving them responsibility for keeping the watch and pulling on the ropes, the sailors shouting 'Hey little Macpherson' to all and sundry. His final kind act was to give her a written testimonial saying that he felt it was his duty to say 'how well the boys conducted themselves on board the ship during the voyage', which encouraged Annie to write to her supporters asking them to prepare not only more boys, but girls also to make up another party for Canada.

Annie placed twenty boys from that first group as 'buttons' in some of the first families in Montreal, a shrewd move, for if they did well Annie would be able to count on the support of these influential families in the future. At the same time she was aware of the temptation to which the boys might well be exposed and asked for them to be remembered at the daily prayer meetings which continued to be held at the Home of Industry, now being supervised by Annie's two sisters, Rachel Merry and Louisa Birt. Annie's two sisters were by now completely involved with her in her work. Rachel Merry, whose warm and motherly personality provided a happy balance to Annie's more forthright and dominating character, was to cross the Atlantic many times with her husband, escorting children to Canada. Her son, William, would in due course take up farming in Canada and his experience in this field was to be useful to Annie. Had it not been for a series of personal tragedies the beautiful Louisa, who was the gay one of the family, with a gift for friendship and a talent for music, might never have become so personally involved in the work. Louisa's two elder children both died and shortly after that her husband was terribly injured in a railway accident which resulted in his

becoming a nervous invalid for the rest his life. Louisa took her husband abroad in the vain hope that it might improve his chances of recovery; instead it almost killed Louisa who returned home, her heart affected by rheumatic fever and malaria and exhausted by the strain of travelling and nursing an invalid.

Although Annie refused to set up a distributing home in Montreal, she did gratefully accept an offer by the Mayor and Council of Belleville of a house, Marchmont. The rental was to be paid by the citizens of Belleville, a pleasant small town. The management of the home was to be left entirely to Annie Macpherson who put Ellen Bilborough in charge. Ellen was to remain at Marchmont for the next thirty years in the role of honorary superintendent. Leslie Thom, a Scottish school teacher who had also accompanied the party, remained behind as well to visit and supervise the children who had been placed out.

That first year Annie made two more journeys to Canada, her sister Louisa, finding the strength and courage to accompany her on one occasion. It was obviously a relief to have a home to go to in Canada after the strain of the first journey when Annie had travelled round the country with her group of boys, staying where opportunity offered, either with the help of a mayor or a well-disposed farmer. Annie writes of the 'intense joy of being met and welcomed home' by Miss Bilborough 'with a face beaming with joy'.⁹ The exhausted children, girls and boys, slept in hammocks or on beds of clean straw. That first night Annie permitted herself a moment to enjoy the scene 'with the moon shining like glittering gold on the lovely bay of Quintie, with not a rustle on lake or leaf' before retiring after prayers and praise, to be ready to deal with the stream of applicants the morrow would bring.

Unlike Maria Rye, Annie never appealed directly for money, but her letters to *The Christian* were nicely calculated to arouse the sympathy of her readers in a practical manner. Writing of the Marchmont Home she went so far as to claim that as 'a home of love' it was 'a sweet foretaste to these unloved and uncared for children of the home in heaven'. Describing the scene she wrote:

Oh, could you, beloved ones, who have given your substance, see them lying, basking under the lovely maple trees around the house,