

pulling and eating the hickory nuts till their fingers and lips are dyed a deep brown colour, the neighbours throwing them over from their orchards quantities of apples! The very cow seems to love the little folk, permitting them to pat and pet her. . . .

Unfortunately for the children their sojourn at Marchmont was likely to be a short one. Like Maria Rye's children, they too would be sent under indentures to work in the homesteads and on the surrounding farms. Unlike Maria, however, Annie had sought to provide supervision on a more systematic basis and as the record books show, a real attempt was made to visit and keep in touch with the children.

There is no direct evidence from the children themselves as to how they viewed their changed circumstances. Annie gave the readers of *The Christian* her account:

It is very encouraging to be welcomed in Montreal by my first detachment of young lads. Canadian air and good food had already worked wonders for them; and to hear *them* give sound, wholesome advice to these now newly arriving was a quicker return than I had ever expected - such as entreating them to shun drink, keep to church and Sunday School, and have a money box for all small money, and to call it 'Miss Macpherson's Box so as to be fellow helpers of this great work'.¹⁰

The policy of encouraging the children to contribute to the emigration funds of the Home of Industry was heavily criticised by some; as Miss Macpherson doubtless realised, the example of children, themselves only recently rescued from destitution, contributing to the emigration fund was a hefty reminder to those wealthier supporters as to what might be expected from them.

Annie spent the winter of 1871 in Canada, obviously finding the cold winter weather immensely invigorating. She had always been fearful of driving, but she overcame this fear, travelling extensively to talk of her work and to prepare the ground for future parties of children. Little was said publicly of the difficulties Annie and her helpers had to overcome in those first years, apart from the occasional reference to a 'black lamb'. As for the Canadians their need for cheap labour was such that they gave no thought, in those early years, as to where the children came from or who they were.

In pre-industrial Canada nearly three-quarters of the population lived in rural areas. There were no machines to replace human labour and the more hands the farmer could secure to work the land the more prosperous he was likely to become. His wife needed help in the house, either with the young children or, later when she was older and no more able to manage on her own. Canadians put their own children to work at an early age, and in a developing land there was little sentiment about the nature of childhood or any understanding of the way a child developed. Children were perceived as the 'raw material' from which hard-working, God-fearing adults were fashioned. Good working habits had to be inculcated at an early age. Children played a very important role in the success or otherwise of a pioneering farming family.

Unless a farmer had a large family, with a constant succession of children able to fill the gaps left as the elder children moved on - either to work in the cities or to take up land further west on their own account - there would only be a few years when he did not require the extra labour that his own children had supplied. It was the more isolated frontier farmers who most wanted the children. They were too far from the towns to sell or buy much, so were well able to absorb a child into their households at small cost to themselves. The simple needs of a child for shelter and food were easily provided on farms where food was plentiful because there were few market outlets. With little understanding of the loneliness that such isolation would mean to a city-bred child, the child rescue societies dwelt on the moral and physical advantages of such a healthy rural life, far from the temptations of the big cities. They never mentioned the fact that child labour was cheaper than hired labour and saw the children taking on the lighter work, freeing the adults for the heavy work in the fields.

Both Maria Rye and Annie Macpherson made much of the fact that some of the children were adopted by the families that took them and brought them up as one of the family. This was true to a certain extent. Figures are difficult to come by, but infant mortality was high among the farming community and it has been estimated that as late as the turn of the century one out of every five to seven Canadian babies died in the first year of life.¹¹ It was not the long cold winters that caused the