

Description of Muskoka District in the 1870's—

(Continued from Page 13) settlers in Draper, and ex-Reeve of the United Townships of Draper, Macaulay, Stephenson, etc." The author is the same gentleman whose business ventures, too far ahead of time, and their unhappy failure, were described in the first article of this series).

Mr. Hamilton continues: "I was determined to go, and like all intending emigrants, was judging between the pros. and the cons. with a strong bias towards the former. In this state of perplexity and strolling along Queen street, Toronto, I saw in the window of a little fat Dutch druggist, who owned a Muskoka farm, a huge round red beet. Nothing like it had I seen even at horticultural shows in England. My last scruple vanished, conquered by a root, and I made up my mind to seek the northern wilderness of milk, potatoes and honey, at the first convenient opportunity. This did not occur for some time, but I made a move in the direction of my future home by

emigrating to Meaford, a very enjoyable country town, tenanted by friendly, sociable citizens . . ."

Here the narrative turns aside for a little to recount a few impressions of that area. Then he proceeds to tell of being aboard the historic boat, the "Waubuno," in the fall of 1874, bound from Collingwood to Parry Sound.

"The voyage to Parry Sound was short and very enjoyable. The Christian Islands ('Faith,' 'Hope' and 'Charity,' according to the naming of the old French missionaries) and other woodland gems set in the placid bosom of the Georgian Bay, were charming in the extreme. The harbor of Parry Sound was land-locked and capable of receiving vessels drawing 18 feet with anchorage close to the wharves, although the mill sawdust was beginning to reduce the depth of the harbor.

Two Kings of Parry Sound

"Parry Sound is a very different place from what I had imagined it to be. I looked for a dull

village of log shanties, but instead I saw some excellent stores including one where five clerks were busily engaged.

There were also some very large mills, notably one operated by J. C. Miller, M.P.P. He and Beatty seemed to be the two kings of Parry Sound. Beatty was a teetotaler, of the pronounced kind. When he sold a lot he introduced temperance clauses into the conveyance, of the most stringent nature. I don't remember the details very accurately, but the purchaser of a Beatty lot was bound not to sell or in any way traffic in liquor during his life and the lives of Her Majesty and of the Royal children and grandchildren, and a year and a month and a day after the decease of all these great persons. The limits of Parry Sound village were thus under an absolute prohibition, so far as the liquor traffic was concerned, the barter of a pig for its equivalent in whisky being forbidden. The village became thus an interesting study for



Mr. Pratt's fine hotel, Rosseau, opened 1871, burned down 1883

temperance legislators. Across the river, however, a tavern flourished as a part of the nucleus of the rival village, then called Carrington. 'Going across the bridge' was then looked upon as a suspicious act, in a teetotaler, and equivalent to going out of a concert to "see a man" or in plain words, to "take a horn." There were, however, a surprising number of teetotal florists in Parry Sound, who visited Carrington, either in broad daylight or surreptitiously rowing across the harbor over its moonlight ripples, but in either case, to consult the landlord of the Carrington tavern as to the best plan of striking cuttings of pinks."

They were careful to avoid Mr. Beatty, nevertheless, for it was a source of amazement to the author how great a hold that gentleman had on the community and how obedient all were to him. He mentions an incident at a concert where a number of young men were making a jolly noise about the entrance. Mr. Beatty was in the audience and rose and mildly said he wished his young friends would make less noise, whereupon silence reigned at once.

Rosseau in Midwinter

The book then proceeds to tell of a few experiences and impressions gained during the following winter in various parts of Parry Sound district, and of the men he met there. One, a settler named Slade, planned to return to England for a visit. He

set out with him on a wintry day in March, 1875, Slade on his road to England and himself on his way to Bracebridge.

"I left Parry Sound in a splendid sleigh driven by fast horses (or at least by horses who wanted to be fast when the road let them) for Bracebridge. We passed through some very deep cuttings in the snowdrifts where the lumbermen had shovelled out roads, and stopped at Rosseau, at the house of the inevitable Pratt. Him I had heard of long before as an incorrigible joker, and one whom it was necessary to pay off in his own coin." 'How deep is your house?' said I. 'A-quarter of a mile.' 'It stretches like your bill when a traveller's leaving.' 'One for you; are you historically acquainted with an interchange of ideas which once took place between the governors of North and South Carolina?' I owned to a dim memory of the matter. We adjourned to another room. After this came dinner, including a superb bit of steak, superbly cooked, a gem to be set in the culinary memory of the future, then we made a third adjournment to smoke real Havanas. Could it be possible that we had got into luxurious civilization again?

"... Pratt, the landlord, is an American, and with the far-seeing speculation of his countrymen, picked out this beautiful site on Lake Rosseau for a tourist hotel on a very large scale. His inveterate joking proclivities have made him some enemies, but I always found him very pleasant, and reasonable

in his charges. Once, among his guests, was an Englishman verging on the Dude species, a grade Dude, in fact. 'Ah, have you —?' began he to Pratt. 'Yes,' said the landlord, 'we have everything here you can call for.' Inwardly and long reflected the Dude, determined to seek for something not to be had. Finally he asked for a bottle of 'double Selzah wataw' — something rarely in the cellar, even of English hotels. 'Certainly,' said Pratt, called the waiter and soon the genuine No. 2 Seltzer appeared. It was from a consignment sent by mistake from Toronto, but the sight of it caused the Dude to wonder and collapse.

"Sometimes, however, the joke was the other way. D. F. McDonald, a Government wood ranger, had brought 16 dogs to Bracebridge on their way to Parry Sound, to be used with dog sleighs in the following winter to convey mails across the ice to Algoma. He telegraphed Pratt, 'Prepare bedroom accommodation in your stable for 16 guests.' Pratt, knowing that Government parties and other tourists of note often sought his hotel, and taking the 'stable' part of the message as facetious, immediately went to a great deal of trouble in preparing 16 of his best bedrooms for the visitors. When he saw McDonald walking up from the hotel wharf with a yelping pack of 16 harnessed dogs, his feelings were too strong for utterance, other than the expectation of violent adjectives."

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