NEAR PETERBOROUGH, ONT.
STORM DATE: SUMMER 1833

THE LIBRARY OF ENTERTAINING KNOWLEDGE.

THE

BACKWOODS OF CANADA:

BEING

LETTERS FROM THE WIFE OF AN EMIGRANT OFFICER,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY OF BRITISH AMERICA.

LONDON:
CHARLES KNIGHT, 22, LUDGATE STREET.

MDCCCXXXVI.

1836

that makes the earth tremble, and the neighbouring trees reel and bow before it.

Though decidedly less windy than our British isles, Canada is subject at times to sudden storms, nearly approaching to what might be termed whirlwinds and hurricanes. A description of one of these tempests I gave you in an early letter. During the present summer I witnessed another hurricane, somewhat more violent and destructive in its effect.

The sky became suddenly overcast with clouds of a highly electric nature. The storm came from the north-west, and its fury appeared to be confined within the breadth of a few hundred yards. I was watching with some degree of interest the rapid movements in the lurid, black, and copper-coloured clouds that were careering above the lake, when I was surprised by the report of trees falling on the opposite shore, and yet more so by seeing the air filled with scattered remnants of the pines within less than a hundred yards of the house, while the wind was scarcely felt on the level ground on which I was standing.

In a few seconds the hurricane had swept over the water, and with irresistible power laid low not less than thirty or forty trees, bending others to the ground like reeds. It was an awful sight to see the tall forest rocking and bowing before the fury of the storm, and with the great trunks falling one after the other, as if they had been a pack of cards thrown down by a breath. Fortunately for us the current of the wind merely passed over our open clearing, doing us no further damage than uprooting three big pine-trees on the ridge above the lake. But in the direction of our

neighbour ——— it did great mischief, destroying many rods of fencing, and crushing his crops with the prostrate trunks and scattered boughs, occasioning great loss and much labour to repair the mischief.

The upturned roots of trees thrown down by the wind are great nuisances and disfigurements in clearings, and cause much more trouble to remove than those that have been felled by the axe. Some of the stumps of these wind-fallen trees will right again if chopped from the trunk soon after they have been blown down, the weight of the roots and upturned soil being sufficient to bring them back into their former places; we have pursued this plan very frequently.

We have experienced one of the most changeable seasons this summer that was possible. The spring was warm and pleasant, but from the latter part of May till the middle of harvest we had heavy rains, cloudy skies, with moist hot days, and frequent tempests of thunder and lightning, most awfully grand, but seemingly less destructive than such storms are at home. Possibly the tall forest-trees divert the danger from the low dwellings, which are sufficiently sheltered from the effect of the lightning. The autumn has also proved wet and cold. I must say at present I do not think very favourably of the climate; however, it is not right to judge by so short an acquaintance with it, as every one says this summer has been unlike any of its predecessors.

The insects have been a sad annoyance to us, and I hailed the approach of the autumn as a respite from their attacks; for these pests are numerous and va-