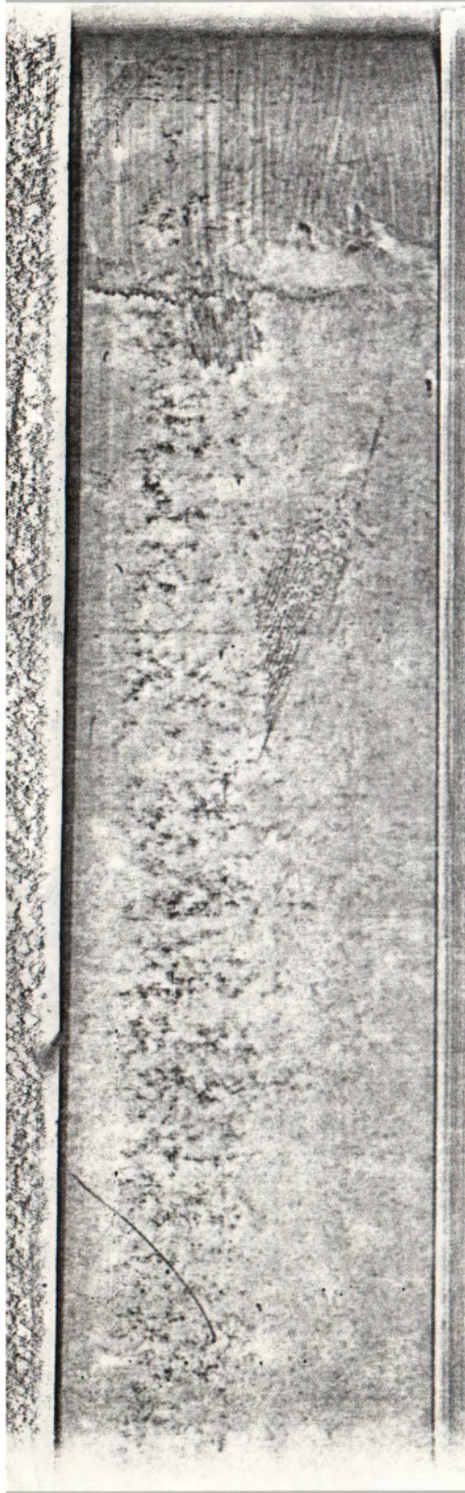


could not believe it was only second to young hyson. To his assurance that to its other good qualities it united medicinal virtues, we replied that, like all other physic, it was very unpalatable.

"After all," said S———, with a thoughtful air, "the blessings and the evils of this life owe their chief effect to the force of contrast, and are to be estimated by that principally. We should not appreciate the comforts we enjoy half so much did we not occasionally feel the want of them. How we shall value the conveniences of a cleared farm after a few years, when we can realize all the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life."

"And how we shall enjoy green tea after this odious decoction of hemlock," said I.

"Very true; and a comfortable frame-house, and nice garden, and pleasant pastures, after these dark forests, log-houses, and no garden at all."

"And the absence of horrid black stumps," rejoined I. "Yes, and the absence of horrid stumps. Depend upon it, my dear, your Canadian farm will seem to you a perfect paradise by the time it is all under cultivation; and you will look upon it with the more pleasure and pride from the consciousness that it was once a forest wild, which, by the effects of industry and well-applied means, has changed to fruitful fields. Every fresh comfort you realize around you will add to your happiness; every improvement within-doors or without will raise a sensation of gratitude and delight in your mind, to which those that revel in the habitual enjoyment of luxury, and even of the com-

From "THE BACKWOODS OF CANADA" being letters from the wife of an emigrant officer. (publisher unknown) in London, England. Published 1836.

monest advantages of civilization, must in a great degree be strangers. My pass-words are, 'Hope! Resolution! and Perseverance!'"

"This," said my husband, "is true philosophy; and the more forcible, because you not only recommend the maxim but practise it also."

I had reckoned much on the Indian summer, of which I had read such delightful descriptions, but I must say it has fallen far below my expectations. Just at the commencement of this month (November) we experienced three or four warm hazy days, that proved rather close and oppressive. The sun looked red through the misty atmosphere, tinging the fantastic clouds that hung in smoky volumes, with saffron and pale crimson light, much as I have seen the clouds above London look on a warm, sultry spring morning.

Not a breeze ruffled the waters, not a leaf (for the leaves had not entirely fallen) moved. This perfect stagnation of the air was suddenly changed by a hurricane of wind and snow that came on without any previous warning. I was standing near a group of tall pines that had been left in the middle of the clearing, collecting some beautiful crimson lichens, S—— not being many paces distant, with his oxen drawing fire-wood. Suddenly we heard a distant hollow rushing sound that momentarily increased, the air around us being yet perfectly calm. I looked up, and beheld the clouds, hitherto so motionless, moving with amazing rapidity in several different directions. A dense gloom overspread the heavens. S———, who had been busily engaged with the cattle, had not noticed my being so near, and now called to me to use all the

Near Peterborough, Ont. Storm date: first few days of Nov 1832

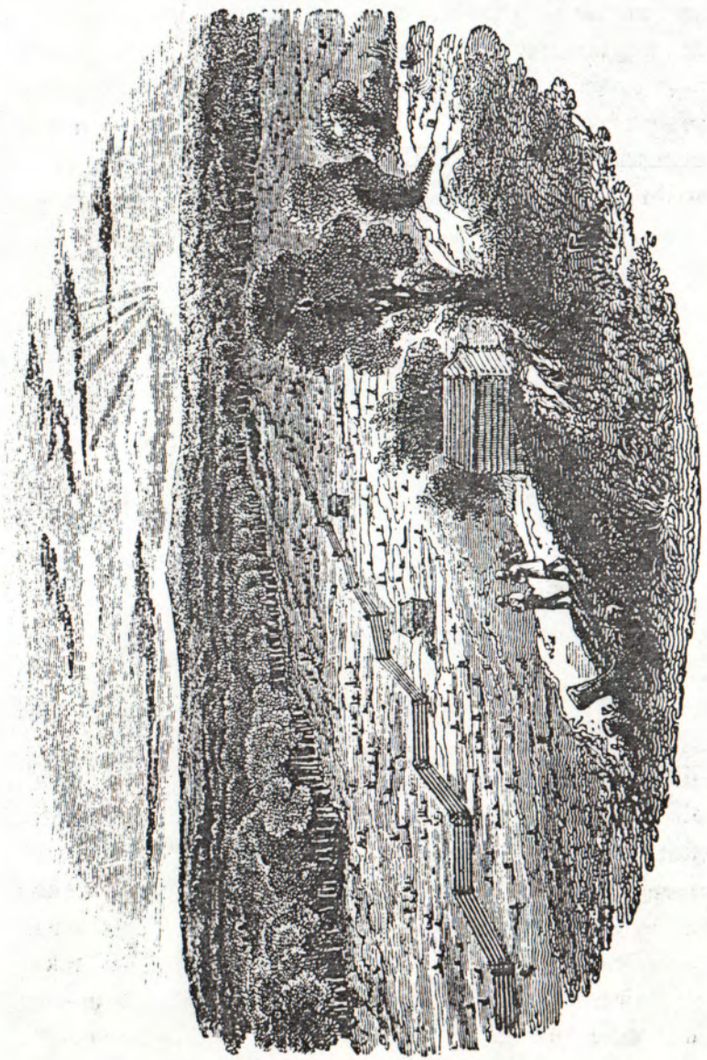
Location Peterborough, Ont., Newcastle District (probably Lakefield)

This storm was during the first few days of Nov 1832 (referred to in letter dated Nov 20, 1832)

speed I could to gain the house, or an open part of the clearing, distant from the pine-trees. Instinctively I turned towards the house, while the thundering shock of trees falling in all directions at the edge of the forest, the rending of the branches from the pines I had just quitted, and the rush of the whirlwind sweeping down the lake, made me sensible of the danger with which I had been threatened.

The scattered boughs of the pines darkened the air as they whirled above me; then came the blinding snow-storm: but I could behold the progress of the tempest in safety, having gained the threshold of our house. The driver of the oxen had thrown himself on the ground, while the poor beasts held down their meek heads, patiently abiding "the pelting of the pitiless storm." S———, my husband, and the rest of the household, collected in a group, watched with anxiety the wild havoc of the warring elements. Not a leaf remained on the trees when the hurricane was over; they were bare and desolate. Thus ended the short reign of the Indian summer.

I think the notion entertained by some travellers, that the Indian summer is caused by the annual conflagration of forests by those Indians inhabiting the unexplored regions beyond the larger lakes is absurd. Imagine for an instant what immense tracts of woods must be yearly consumed to affect nearly the whole of the continent of North America: besides, it takes place at that season of the year when the fire is least likely to run freely, owing to the humidity of the ground from the autumnal rains. I should rather attribute the peculiar warmth and hazy appearance of



Newley clear'd Land