Of Sunken Islands and Pestilence

Restoring the Voice of Edward Taylor Fletcher to Nineteenth-Century Canadian Literature

Of Sunken Islands and Pestilence

EDWARD TAYLOR FLETCHER

edited by
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Preface

This book is a recuperation of an important voice in Canadian literature, a voice that adds to and potentially alters our understanding of the Canadian long poem and the cultural values of Canadian poetry. However, this preface is also personal—it is not possible for me to write about Edward Taylor Fletcher's works without also telling how I came by them. Fletcher's commonplace books were passed to me by my grandmother, Beth Fairley (née Latham, formerly Gifford), who had in turn received them from her brother Ralph Latham. The manuscripts were water-damaged, but fortunately the entries were written in a waterproof walnut-coloured ink that preserved the text. Fletcher's immaculate handwriting and the excerpts from poetry and lectures he had copied fired my young imagination, although the books did not at first reveal whom I was reading, and no one knew their origins. As I later discovered, Fletcher's library was largely lost, and evidently his youngest son, Cecil, had insisted that his diaries be burned. Fortunately an older son, Sidney, passed those commonplace journals and a handful of other books from his personal library to his own daughter, Marion, who married into the Latham family. Her daughter was my grandmother, who married into the Gifford family that adopted me nearly eight decades after Fletcher's death. The commonplace books and the few remaining volumes from Fletcher's personal library are now held in the Special Collections of the McPherson Library at the University of Victoria, and his few surviving manuscripts are in Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa.

The two unpaginated volumes contained entries in several languages, nearly all of which I could not read. Nor did Fletcher's own name appear in his commonplace books, and it was only when I was in graduate school that I finally identified him as the owner of the books by working backwards from the newspaper clippings, receipts, and one signed bill tucked between the pages. Using this information I could conjecture about the author's identity, but it was only

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through the sole personal entry in these books of quotations that I could confirm his identity. Now, with his poetry and essays coming back to the world, that sole entry colours how I (and perhaps readers coming to him through *this* book) understand everything he would go on to write:

> Quebec, 9 June 1869. Nearly twenty-nine years have passed since I made the first extract in this book: the German extract on the Apostle John bears [the] date 9 Dec. 1840 as the day of entry. Since then I have married, have had thirteen children of whom seven have died: and my dear wife died 8th April 1868 (last year): my dear daughter Harriet Alma died 8th Oct. 1868 aged 14.

By identifying Harriet Alma Fletcher who died of typhoid on this date, I could identify her father as Edward Taylor Fletcher. As an indication of his psychology, Fletcher wrote "of whom seven have died" not "of whom six lived," and this centring of loss mirrors his response to his own experience with cholera and the loss of his mother to the disease in 1834, as recounted in the memoir of his illness in the pandemic. His son Sidney's memories of his father's grief in 1868 reflect this as well. Death is everywhere in Fletcher's writings, and death is the everyday. Survival, health, and joy are the aberrations. This persists across both his published writings and his two surviving commonplace books, which are primarily comprised of his transcriptions of a mixture of poetry and prose, a significant proportion of which are concerned with mortality, presumably a subject that preoccupied him across his life.

Fletcher's poetry circles these traumas with pestilence, plague, lost children, and mourning as frequent points of reference for sixty more years after his own experience of having cholera as a youth. These encircled sorrows also reveal ways of expressing solidarity or kinship with others through shared experiences of suffering. I completed the initial edits to this project before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. The centrality of illness and death was already clear to me then, but revising the manuscript amidst the fear of COVID-19 has emphasized how endless the bonds of shared suffering can be. Fletcher's traumatic experience amidst a pandemic gives voice to our shared experiences today. He shows how thin the membrane is that separates our world from his.

Having established Fletcher's identity, I realized that one of the few extant books in his library had been written by him: *Nestorius: A Phantasy*, a long poem of fifty-six stanzas. From there, I could locate his other works, as indexed in the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM). This

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in turn led to a graduate student presentation on Fletcher for the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada conference in Saskatoon in 2004. I had intended this to be my only approach to him, but the more I read of his work, the more I recognized that Fletcher had challenged me with something different, with complexities of form and content that distinguished his work from that of his contemporaries in Canada. Before Archibald Lampman's fluid prosody or Duncan Campbell Scott's acrimonious wedding of racism and the birth of a national literature, there was Fletcher: working in multiple and diverse languages, and intensely fixated on overlaying many cultures, many languages, many faiths, and many places in his writings. His orientation was towards Britain and his view was openly Romanticist with all the exoticization that implies, but his writing was different in nature from what followed, and its frame of reference was wider. Unlike so many of his Canadian contemporaries, Britain was very much not the centre of his vision.

Fletcher also appeared to advocate for a more open attitude than his contemporaries to the variety of faiths he encountered in Victoria after having retired there. "[N]one having any great preponderance in numbers," he wrote, "we all get along in peace and harmony" ("Notes from Victoria" 74). This is a natural continuation of his descriptions of Quebec City. While these are not visions to be promulgated uncritically, they do speak to a potentiality prior to the Confederation poets that might have left us with different relations today if they had not been superseded.

Of course, Fletcher is also problematic. He is bound up with the tropes of his time, with the racist Romantic figure of the noble savage, Darwinian teleologies, and the colonial functions of his role as a surveyor, as well as with the strange silence of Indigenous voices in his works—there are only a few deeply suggestive exceptions. However, reading him and learning that the Confederation poets read and admired him, forces a readjustment of our sense of Canadian literature's heritage, rhetoric, and genealogy. It also forces us to recognize that the diversity and multiculturalism of the 1970s (if not decolonization) were not entirely new but were a rebirth and expansive transformation of something that had already been expressed a century earlier, when a more limited sense of religious, linguistic, and racial diversity prevailed. Today we are not generally satisfied with the multiculturalism of the 1970s, but the sense that nineteenth century Canadian literature may have sought something culturally and linguistically plural opens us to possibilities, or larval potentialities, that expand how we might read Fletcher's contemporaries.

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The challenge of this critical edition remains much the same now as it was when I first ventured to study Fletcher's writings, even if its ambitions are larger. It remains a tangled knot of material histories, of real artefacts held in private hands, of a temptation to retroactively read a modern "multiculturalism" or "world literature" into a past that had no real sense of the word or employed a very different meaning for "world," of our contemporary efforts to exceed the politics of representation, and my own aesthetic temptations to value works of stylistic complexity and of a near-modernist sense of tradition and allusion. There was no way to disentangle the material history of Fletcher's commonplace books and library, both of which flowed through me, from the critical apparatus that I would bring to bear on the material as a reader and editor. It was only through those linguistically diverse journals that I found his other published and forgotten writings, so his linguistic pluralism could not help but shape my understanding since it was the feature most evident from the start and that posed the greatest challenges.

In 2007, I had the opportunity to discuss Fletcher's long poems written in and (I argue) *about* British Columbia for the BC Studies Conference at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, an event that had settler colonialism as one of its central themes. Questions from Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation Elders in the audience and from community members deeply shaped how I read and then reread Fletcher. This was an uncomfortable situation since I was both personally implicated as a settler who was adopted by Fletcher's descendants and as a scholar struggling to think through his representations (or the absences) of Indigenous peoples in his works. I remain indebted to that audience and their direct, demanding, urgent, and charitable questions—I carried the draft of this book with me in 2019 to a graciously and informatively hosted tour for university faculty of the Secwépemc Museum built from the former Kamloops Indian Residential School building. I wanted to ensure I kept those questions from more than a decade earlier in my mind, and it was a private sense of thanks. My debt to those questions only grew. Today, as I make the final edits to this project in 2021, the harm caused within that building is again in the public eye on national and international levels, and any reader of this work must recognize that programs of genocide sit parallel to Fletcher's work as a land surveyor and that his differences from Scott, while meaningful, do not absolve the similarities in their participation in the processes of colonization. The global (pandemic) and the local (genocide) both shape how I reread my reading of Fletcher as this project completed its long path.

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With that in mind, recovering Fletcher's voice should also bring his silences to our attention. He may have sensed some trace of this in his early poem, "Legend of the Isiamagomi" in which "The tide of cultivation rolls along / With ruthless haste, and stern utility / Shall silence soon the low, delicious song / Of the wood-elves" (123). In the poem, that cultivation carries with it a pandemic that nearly claimed Fletcher's life and took those of his most dearly loved family, and likewise while he abhors that destruction, the Romanticist racism of "wood-elves" exoticizes as it elevates. This shapes how readers will approach him. As will be detailed later, Fletcher is not a nineteenth century backward echo of our terribly slow movement towards reconciliation today, and his philological hierarchies of complexities in languages were not without an easy bridge to racist tropes (that he rejected while remaining proximal to). Reading Fletcher is not an excuse for the colonial histories and racism in Canada today. Nonetheless, at the same time, he *appears* to have recognized the complexity and nuance of Indigenous languages, which is not typical of the orientalist philologists he read, and which he aligned with the languages for which he held the deepest respect. That is, Fletcher is very much engaged in the kind of hierarchical organization of languages that a creative critic like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o calls to account as a colonial logic to be rejected, as it should and must be rejected, yet at the same time Fletcher does not place the settler languages of English and French at the apex, which makes him differ meaningfully from his contemporaries. It is likewise easy to read (and repudiate) the trope of the "vanishing Indian" in Fletcher's works, but it is nearly impossible to read it the same *way* as one would in Scott or many other nineteenth century Canadian writers. Fletcher implicitly aligns his own more Romantic values with a world that is actively damaged by the militant advances of colonization and modernity, a modernity that he also saw as connected with the pandemic disease that nearly took his life, just as it sits in our immediate experiences as readers. In this, he differs significantly from the Confederation poets who followed after him and read him, most especially from Scott.

Since I cannot disentangle my own personal and familial connections from this project, I must instead acknowledge them as influences. The next stage in my work on Fletcher came from teaching him in a Canadian literature course at Simon Fraser University in 2011. The readings for it ranged from female poets in the early nineteenth century (from Carole Gerson and Gwendolyn Davies's *Canadian Poetry*) to Elizabeth Smart and Malcolm Lowry in the twentieth. But the most sustained student reactions were to Fletcher's long poems *Nestorius*

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and *The Lost Island*. Afterwards, Apollonia Felicity Elsted, a student raised amid deep ties to Canadian literature, set Fletcher's *The Lost Island* in a letterpress edition (2012), with newly commissioned engravings by Peter Lazarus, which was printed at the Barbarian Press, owned and operated by her parents. This was Fletcher's first return to print since the posthumous publication, in 1913, of his "Reminiscences of Old Quebec"—a span of almost a century. The eagerness to bring him back to the twenty-first century and to living readers set aside the felicitous nature of waiting for a centenary rebirth.

It was only at this point that I began to consider more seriously the notion of preparing a scholarly recuperation of Fletcher's works. To fully annotate Fletcher's complete *oeuvre* would be both a lifetime's work in a multitude of languages I do not "possess" but also possibly or even likely an approach that would be harmful to the pleasure of readers, both general and scholarly, including students. Both time and audience dictated a different method, and I have sought to find a balance between the narrative approach a more general readership may appreciate and the sometimes proscriptive interpretations that are helpful to students but that scholars find constricting. Time and readership dictated limitations on annotation and analysis and constrained this collection to Fletcher's poetry and memoirs. His less accessible non-fiction prose is made available in a parallel document online, hosted by Humanities Commons, and which is cited here a number of times where his critical interests overlap with his creative work—the most obvious instance is his essay on Atlantis and his long poem, but there are several others. Scholars may prefer to access Fletcher's ancillary works in their original state while students and general readers would likely need such a resource as a guide. For an expert surveyor like Fletcher, it is the difference between a dedicated outdoorsman and a weekend hiker—any rational trail sets its markers for the latter not the former while accommodating both, and hence I have annotated with students in mind.

Fletcher challenges his editor. He works in an abundance of languages, and his writings are deeply allusive to texts in those original languages. In these respects, he can be just as challenging to edit, or even more so, than Pound, Eliot, and H. D. (Hilda Doolittle). Fletcher also published under pseudonyms, at least in the early years of his literary career, which opens the tantalizing possibility that additional examples of his work are in plain view but have yet to be identified as such (see Morgan 1867, 128). It is also clear some of Fletcher's writings have either been lost entirely or have yet to come to light. Subsequent academics working on early Canadian literature mention his manuscripts, diaries, and publications

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but without offering citations or other evidence of their existence—clues that have failed to bear fruit even after extensive exploration. Those scholars who first loosely discussed Fletcher are also long dead, such as Mary Markham Brown who identifies his publications under the names "Korah" and "Tabitha." Their notes are long disposed of, and the sources on which they relied most likely came from private collections. Finding those lost references is a matter of luck and locality, and if those scholars drew on living memory, this is also now lost, or at least it is to me. I have relied on and enjoyed such luck and locality in other more contemporary projects, but that kind of felicitous situation does not exist with Fletcher.

In other words, this book is a beginning and not a terminus, and it carries the intention of provoking rather than resolving or finalizing. These are first not final words—my interpretations are suggestive and should not limit others.

The current edition sets out to annotate Fletcher's poetry and memoirs in a manner intended to support an undergraduate student reader without freighting the texts with excess commentary that could distract the general reader. Scholars may find the volume overly annotated at times, while students may be left with questions still unanswered. Dating format has been standardized throughout, several spellings have been modernized, and minor changes to punctuation have been silently modernized as well. There is also the difficulty or even the impossibility of locating the original works from which Fletcher quotes, often in his own idiosyncratic translations without citations. Where it is both helpful to readers and possible for me, I have supplied citations to Fletcher's source materials. I am neither a classicist nor a philologist, so it is certain that other scholars will have much to add and possibly much to critique here. If this volume is quickly deemed insufficient and superseded by new work with many additions, then I will have gladly achieved my goal of provocation as my own voice recedes. But none of those additions or critiques can happen without Fletcher first returning to print here as part of our wider literary heritage.

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I must thank my grandmother Beth Fairley, who first passed Edward Taylor Fletcher's commonplace books to me, her brother Ralph Latham who preserved them, and my aunt and uncle Molly and Hugh Dickey who gave me the few surviving volumes of Fletcher's library. This book has been a very long time coming, and I am sorry I could not share its arrival with you. I benefited from the comments and thoughts of several audience members at academic conferences, all of whom encouraged this work—some deeply shaped my thinking. Thank you not only for listening to preliminary work on this project and giving much needed encouragement but for contributing to my understanding of it. I also owe a debt to the librarians who gave me their aid and to the libraries in which I wrote and edited: Surrey Libraries and the librarians of the City Centre branch, the McPherson Library of the University of Victoria, the Bennett and Fraser Libraries at Simon Fraser University, the Rutherford Library of the University of Alberta, Library and Archives Canada, University of New Brunswick Libraries, and the Giovatto Library of Fairleigh Dickinson University. Susan Best also first brought Sidney Ashe Fletcher's unpublished autobiography to my attention and shared her genealogical work on the descendants of Edward Taylor Fletcher's father, Captain John Fletcher. I also appreciate Isabella Wang's invitation to read Fletcher's "Legend of the Isiamagomi" for the Dead Poets Reading series during the early days of the pandemic, an event that made me revise my sense of the affective elements of the work.

I also owe my thanks to students who have read Fletcher's long poems for my classes, and special gratitude to Apollonia Felicity Elsted, whose interest found expression in an exquisite letterpress edition of *The Lost Island*, as well as my thanks for the great kindness and insights of her parents, Jan and Crispin Elsted, into Fletcher's poetics. Thank you, dear barbarians. I also owe Peter Midgley my appreciation for his early support for this book and razor-sharp editorial

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insights. Several colleagues and friends have also lent me needed encouragement and kindness: Otoniya Juliane Okot Bitek for really hearing me, Adam Rudder for making me own this, Charles Sligh for Victorian graces early in the game, and Isabelle Keller-Privat for all things prosody and showing me rue Sainte-Ursule.

I am left amazed by the professional work of the staff of Athabasca University Press, and by the erudition and editorial vision of Pamela Holway, who is as much a partner in this as she is an editor. You have given me not only sound advice with support and sternness as each was needed, but also a model for editorial professionalism and pragmatism. I also extend my gratitude to the blind readers who gave their time and helpful remarks—scholarly publishing would be impossible without them. I may not have reconciled all your visions, but this project is stronger for your having shared them.

Lastly, my family, near and far . . . My siblings have tolerated my ramblings about Fletcher, my parents awakened and nurtured all these interests, my sons Finlay and Riordan have discovered Fletcher all on their own through secret maps and magical scrolls, and my wife Lindsay has given sound scholarly counsel and much needed assistance with Greek, Latin, and philology.

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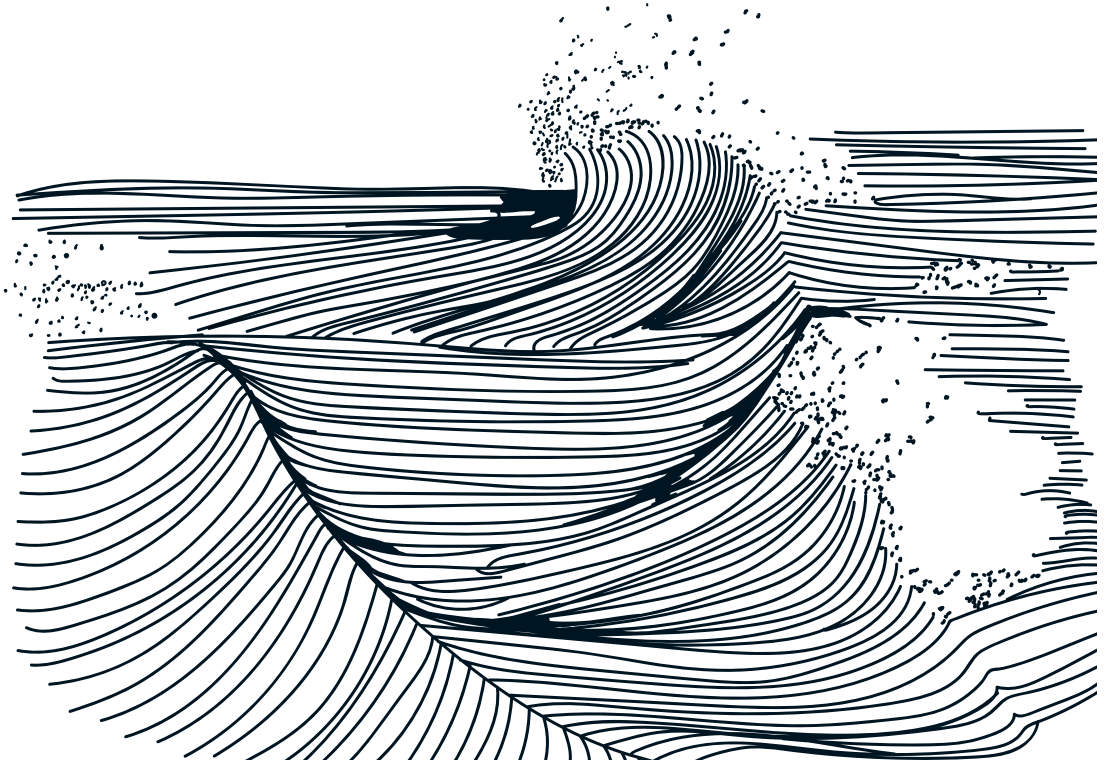

Introduction

Edward Taylor Fletcher was a Canadian poet, travel writer, essayist, surveyor, philologist, and translator. His literary works are linguistically and culturally plural in the broadest sense, which makes him unusual among his contemporaries, especially in the realm of Canadian poetry. He translated or studied literary works from Icelandic, Finnish, Old Norse, Polish, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit, while also speaking French, German, and Italian in addition to English, and his commonplace books reveal an interest in Coptic and Arabic. He was secretary to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, and president of the Toronto Literary Association. In addition to his forty-year career as surveyor, during which he rose to the position of deputy surveyor general for Quebec, Fletcher had also trained as an architect. The *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* describes him as a "scholar in his own right" who possessed "an incredible facility for languages" and also enjoyed chess, was an amateur musician who played the cello, and was "a keen sportsman, a crack shot, and a fencer" (Langelier 1990, 321). This echoes the description in the *Bibliotheca Canadianis*, which says he "possesses considerable powers as an ethnologist, linguist and translator" (Morgan 1865, 128). His travel writings are equally broad, reaching from Labrador to Vancouver Island, and his poetry interweaves Canadian landscapes with modern and ancient traditions of the East and West.

Fletcher integrates allusions to, as well as prosodic and particularly metrical innovations from, several different literary traditions into his work, among them the Finnish *Kalevala*, India's *Mahabharata*, and the Old Norse *Poetic Edda*, while demonstrating a careful attention to and knowledge of landscape and location. His exploits and achievements situate him among a remarkable coterie in Canadian literary history and he is, in short, unlike any other Canadian writer of his time in content, style, and concerns. And yet despite standing among a relatively

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narrow range of figures, he appears to be almost completely forgotten to literary history.

Biography: E.T.F.

Edward Taylor Fletcher was born in Canterbury, England, on 20 May 1817, and first arrived in Canada on 20 October 1827 with his father, Captain John Fletcher of the 72nd Regiment of the British Army, his mother Martha (née Ashe), his elder sister, Anna, and his younger sister, Harriet. Two months later, he was enrolled at a private school in Québec City run by the Reverend Daniel Wilkie, where his studies included mathematics, Greek and Latin, and philosophy, before continuing on, in 1832, "to the Grand Seminaire," apparently as a boarding student, as he recalls in "Reminiscences of Old Quebec" (85). He fell ill from cholera on 24 July 1834. The disease had arrived in Canada two years earlier, claiming thousands of lives despite various quarantine measures (Hamlin 2009, 47), and this second major outbreak had begun nearly two weeks prior to Fletcher's infection, on 11 July (Nelson 1866, 144). Although he survived, his mother contracted cholera while caring for him and died on 30 July 1834. Fletcher's hair turned prematurely white following his convalescence, and this experience appears to be the central trauma in his life, recurring repeatedly across his poetic works for another sixty years. During the Rebellions of 1837–38, he enlisted and was enrolled in the Quebec Engineer Rifles from 1838 but, as his son Sidney points out (Fletcher 1935, 212), this consisted of drilling and doing guard duty without any combat.[1] The records of the Montreal City Militia list him as a second lieutenant in the Montreal Rifle Battalion.

After school, Fletcher became an architectural student, learning under his cousin Frederick Hacker, for whom he became a clerk and then a partner. Around the same time (in December 1940), he began to keep his multilingual commonplaces books—a practice he appears to have continued for the rest of his life. He was licenced as a land surveyor on 7 March 1842, for the newly created Province of Canada, and on 17 March, in the original provincial capital of Kingston, the Governor General appointed Fletcher as a surveyor of land for Canada East (formerly Lower Canada), as was announced in the *Quebec Mercury* on 31 March by the office of the secretary of the Province of Quebec.

1 See Sidney's biographical memoir of his father (Fletcher 1935), which is included in the present volume (211).

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Having secured a career and income, his domestic life developed. On 21 October 1846, he and Henrietta Amelia Lindsay were married in the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral in Montréal. Born in 1827, Henrietta was the daughter of William Burns Lindsay, then clerk of the legislative assembly of the United Province of Canada (and whose son of the same name—one of Henrietta's brothers—would eventually become the first clerk of the House of Commons). In 1849, Fletcher was appointed secretary of the newly created board of examiners for land surveyors in Canada, subsequently becoming the secretary for Lower Canada when the board was split in 1851, a position in which he served until 1858. These biographical milestones inform his choice of themes in his writing and his deep attention to landscapes in his poetry and travel narratives.

We also know that Pierre Coté, "a well-dressed young man," was accused of stealing "chamois leather, six sovereigns, and four dollars in bank notes" while working and residing in Fletcher's home but was acquitted by the jury on 18 January 1854 ("Court of Quarter Sessions," 1854, 2). The family resided in Toronto for a time shortly after this, where his son Sidney Ashe Fletcher was born in 1856, but by 1860 they had returned to Montréal. His third surviving son was Ormond and his youngest and fourth was Cecil, although I have been able to identify only ten of his thirteen children.[2]

In the summer of 1863, Fletcher travelled through the Saguenay by water to Lac Saint-Jean, as detailed in this collection, and explored a route very similar to that of Highway 381 today, in connection with the proposed building of a road to link Saint-Urbain and the Baie des Ha! Ha! The family moved again in 1866 to Ottawa, where they lived in New Edinburgh, near to Rideau Hall, but they returned to Québec City in 1867 at some point after Confederation on 1 July. Less than a year later, in April 1868, Fletcher's wife, Henrietta, died in childbirth, and only six months thereafter, his fourteen-year-old daughter Harriet Alma died of typhoid fever, echoing the loss of his mother in 1834. Writing in his own autobiography, his son Sidney later recalled his father's grief:

2 These ten are: John Ernest Fletcher (17 August 1849–11 July 1850), Everard Hyde Fletcher (8 May 1851–15 October 1925), Martha Jane Fletcher (14 February 1853–30 January 1880), Harriet Alma Fletcher (23 September 1854–8 October 1868), Sidney Ashe Fletcher (18 October 1856–23 December 1934), Ormond Fletcher (1859–28 August 1898?), Vivian Fletcher (29 May 1860–3 June 1860), Harold Fletcher (10 August 1861–18 August 1861), Cecil Charles Fletcher (25 September 1862–31 December 1931), and Henriette [also Henrietta] Amelia Fletcher (8 April 1868–9 February 1946). My thanks to Susan Best for her genealogical work.

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> A dreadful time this was to all of us. My father seemed to me to be in a sort of daze for a long time. We could hear him moving around at night and mourning his loss. I went once out of my bed to mourn with him. He was much affected, and we wept together. He kissed me and taking me in his arms brought me back to my bed but saying nothing. The Reverend Charles Hamilton of St. Matthew's Church on St. John Street, where we attended, was a great comfort to my father and to all of us.[3]

It is difficult to reconcile this depth of feeling with the absence of literary work for him during this period, but the images of children, plague, death, adoption, fostering, and the stark voice of loss permeate his later works just as much as those of his youth.

During the summer of 1875, Fletcher made a voyage to Labrador, together with Sidney and several other companions, to explore various mineral deposits, a journey that both he and Sidney recount. He competed in the chess tournaments in Québec City in 1877, ranking fourth then seventh in a joint tournament with Montréal, and by 1882 was on the comité de direction of the Association d'Échecs du Canada—his obituary in the *Semi-Weekly Colonist* also describes him as "one of the best chess players in the province" ("Westminster" 1897, 1). In 1881 he became a subscriber to the Anglican periodical the *Church Guardian*, but these are only fragments of a life, whatever personal and emotional states they speak to individually.

In 1878, Fletcher was appointed deputy surveyor general for the province of Quebec. Following his retirement from the Crown Lands Department on 29 July 1882, he served as the secretary of the land surveyors of the Province of Quebec, an association that he had helped to found. He retired from this position in 1885, and the 1880s showed a period of increasing literary productivity as his professional demands appear to have lessened. He found time before and after his retirement to write of his earlier life, though neither recollections were published during his lifetime. In 1886 or 1887, he moved to British Columbia, accompanied by his daughter Henriette and youngest son, Cecil.[4] He then privately published his first long poem two years later in Ottawa, this following on

3 Sidney's autobiography will shortly be published in *"The Sealed Book of the Future": The Collected Prose of Edward Taylor Fletcher*, a digital edition intended to complement the present collection.

4 According to the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, the move took place in 1887 (Langelier 1990, 321), but Fletcher's son Sidney reports that it was 1886 (Fletcher 2022). The

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a small, private edition of 1887. He would live in British Columbia for another decade. He, Henriette, and Cecil first lived in Victoria with his eldest surviving son, Captain Everard Hyde Fletcher (1851–1925), the inspector of post offices for the province. All of Fletcher's other sons were by then resident in British Columbia. Cecil subsequently left for work in Yale, and Henriette moved to New Westminster to live with her brother Sidney, later followed by her father at some point prior to 1892. He would remain with Sidney for the rest of his life.

After contracting influenza, Edward Taylor Fletcher died on 1 February 1897, having survived and lost family in a pandemic and to endemic disease.

Reception

Fletcher has largely escaped literary history without remark. For C. M. Whyte-Edgar in *A Wreath of Canadian Song*, Fletcher is among "the number of those who did really good work for the contemporary press, which was only collected years after, in many cases not at all" (1910, 23). Mary Lu MacDonald mentions Fletcher in passing for his poems "Day-Dawn," "Noon," and "Night," all published in an 1839 issue of the *Literary Garland*, and Mary Markham Brown provides a bibliography of Fletcher's contributions to the *Literary Garland* and related writings (MacDonald 1992, 161; Brown 1962, 11, 56). However, this is nearly the full scope of reviews and critical responses to his writings.[5]

Brown's summation also points to the difficulties in identifying Fletcher's works, some having been published under pseudonyms, and others seemingly unpublished and now most likely lost, such as his poem "The Lay of Leif Erickson" and the essays "Mark System of the Ancient Germans" and "On the Sanskrit Language and Literature."[6] The poem, which apparently won the "prize medal offered for public competition" by the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec in 1853 (Brown 1962, 56), would be a useful complement to Fletcher's

earlier date is almost certainly correct since, in Fletcher's second surviving commonplace book, his excerpts from Georg Ebers (in German) are dated "Victoria B.C. 15 August 1886."

5 George Duncan Mitchell mentions Fletcher in passing in his self-published *Our Kindred Spirits: Some Family Histories*, as his great-grandmother was Fletcher's sister (Mitchell 1995, 66).

6 Several further papers that Fletcher presented but that remained unpublished are listed in Frederick Würtele's *Index of the Lectures, Papers and Historical Documents Published by the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec* (1891): "On the History of Alchemy," in 1841; "The Tyranny of the Many," in 1861; and "Jérôme Savanarola," in 1875 (Würtele 1891, 43, 45, 47).

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commentary on Erickson in "Notes of a Voyage to St. Augustine, Labrador." His essay on Sanskrit would likewise inform his work if it could be found, although the snippets he included in his commonplace books and essays reveal some of the readings and passages that were of particular interest to him.

Brown also notes his publication of poetry in the *Quebec Mercury* beginning in 1834, but the poems of the period are generally published with only initials for attribution, so it is impossible at present to know which might be Fletcher's pseudonyms. In the absence of Brown's source information as a basis for attributing anonymous work from the 1834 volume of the *Quebec Mercury* to Fletcher, any effort to determine what pseudonyms he may have used would amount to pure conjecture. She drew on the *Bibliotheca Canadensis; or, A Manual for Canadian Literature*, which makes the same claim, again without elaboration (Morgan 1867, 128). The Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, of which Fletcher would later be a member, advertised its meetings regularly in the paper, so it is certainly a plausible venue for his juvenilia. However, all of the unattributed poems published that year in the *Quebec Mercury* can either be firmly attributed to other poets or are stylistically quite distinct from Fletcher's attachment to enjambment and internal rhyme. Of course, this does not preclude his works from having appeared there, per Brown's assertion, but none have thus far been identified.

I have been able to locate reviews only of Fletcher's two long poems, both written late in his career. In 1889, an anonymous reviewer for the *Quebec Morning Chronicle* wrote of *The Lost Island*:

> Mr. Edward Taylor Fletcher, P.L.S. of Victoria, B.C., a gentleman well known and much esteemed in Quebec, where he resided very many years—sends us *The Lost Island*, written by himself in striking verse. The little volume is edited by Mr. William Wicksteed in Ottawa. The story, of course, is told of the submerged Atlantis. Mr. Fletcher's imagination is very rich and original, and he has contrived to invest his narrative with a good deal of color. His incidents are managed with spirit, and his character-drawing is exceedingly strong. The poem is suggestive, and the author's friends will be glad to note that he is as vigorous intellectually as ever. (Review of *The Lost Island* 1889, 4)[7]

The review is followed by the final stanza of the poem, by way of a sample of Fletcher's work. The editor mentioned, William Wicksteed, was Fletcher's

7 The reviewer is commenting on the 1889 edition of *The Lost Island*.

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relative by marriage. He, too, wrote poetry and was the author of a collection with the appropriately Victorian title *Waifs in Verse*.[8]

The most prominent remarks about Fletcher pertain to these late poems and his influence on the Confederation poets. David Ketterer momentarily compares Fletcher and Lampman for their "Fantasy themes" by noting Fletcher's *The Lost Island* (Ketterer 1992, 63), but this implies Fletcher was of a group with Lampman, not his predecessor. It is also part of a study of science fiction and fantasy, not poetry, and it is difficult to place Fletcher in a Canadian tradition of epic fantasy poetry (if indeed one can be said to exist). Taken as a whole, this is the scope of Fletcher's presence in scholarship on Canadian literature. Lampman himself reviewed the poem in 1893, writing that Fletcher had

> a gift of high imagination and sonorous and beautiful versification. . . . It seems strange that amid the numerous company of verse-makers whom our reviewers delight to honour with sounding paragraphs, and whose work is, much of it, such very indifferent stuff, a writer capable of *The Lost Island* and *Nestorius* should have reached old age almost unknown as a poet beyond a limited group of sympathetic friends. Let us do honour to such a poet, who has maintained a reserve so fine and so unusual, who has run so far counter to the clamorous custom of his age as to live out a long life in the tranquil life of books, wisdom and poetry, without caring whether the public buy his photograph, or the reviewers blow all their penny whistles in his praise. (Lampman 1893, n.p.)

Very similar comments about a "flourish of trumpets" are made by "Fidelis" in a review of *Nestorius* for *The Week*, who wrote that the poem "contains more real poetry in proportion to its size than many far more pretentious volumes. . . . It deserves to find many readers" (1892, 762).

8 Gustavus William Wicksteed was, more specifically, Fletcher's brother-in-law, having married Fletcher's older sister, Anne, in 1839. At the time, Wicksteed—who had begun his career in 1828 as an assistant law clerk for the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada—was involved with the interim Special Council as the chief assistant to attorney general Charles Richard Ogden. He specialized in statutory law and the drafting of proposed legislation and, in the years to come, would go on to serve as a senior law clerk and chief translator for the Legislative Assembly of the United Province of Canada and then, after Confederation, for the House of Commons. *Waifs in Verse* was first published in 1878, in Montréal, with a second edition then issued in Ottawa in 1887, the year of Wicksteed's retirement.

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Lampman's praise signals Fletcher's importance to the Confederation poets but also notes his obscurity. What is telling here is that Fletcher's clear inspiration to Lampman signals precisely the same calls for greater recognition afforded the authors already firmly seated in the Canadian canon. As an example, for Tom Marshall, "Roberts was the first Canadian poet of impressive achievement. He deserves his special position as the father of Canadian poetry, and, as we know, he gave particular impetus and inspiration to Archibald Lampman, who in turn encouraged Duncan Campbell Scott" (1979, 12). Of course, Fletcher's inspiration mirrors this, and while Roberts's *Orion* and *In Divers Tones* precede Fletcher's *The Lost Island* by a few years, Fletcher was already publishing poetry twenty-six years prior to Roberts's birth. It seems impossible, however, to bind Fletcher in with Marshall's "Dear Bad Poets" preceding Roberts. Fletcher exemplifies the alternate possibility to the poor quality of much early Canadian poetry based on the limits of "the literary education and models that they had" (Marshall 1979, 5), and indeed, as the annotations to this collection show, Fletcher had ample access to a wide range of literary resources.[9] If we accept the landscape emphasis and Marshall's selection from John Matthews that "the successes of the later Confederation poets have much to do with their ability to apply the Romantic-Victorian idiom selectively to the Canadian environment" (1979, 5), then Fletcher challenges this model for success by expanding beyond the British national focus and English language traditions of the "Romantic-Victorian idiom," effectively offering an alternate model still concerned with the Canadian environment but relating to it differently. He too drew on the Romantic-Victorian idiom but also others as well beyond English language poetry. Likewise, while it is common to see the Confederation poets as uniquely situating Canadian landscapes as suitable for a national poetry rather than fixating on an imagined "home" in Britain, Fletcher was doing so in "Legend of the Isiamagomi" at the outset of his career and only turned to reimagining Canadian landscapes through an unseen and unremembered "elsewhere" in his late long poems, both of which fixate on his new experiences of British Columbia locations.

9 As the broad range of texts to which Fletcher refers becomes apparent across the annotations to this collection, readers may wish to compare references with the *Catalogue of Books in the Library of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec*, which further indicates the range of materials at Fletcher's disposal as well as to his colleagues. Likewise, the newspaper clippings and transcriptions in his commonplace books, held at the McPherson Library of the University of Victoria, show what he could access in Québec and on the West Coast in Victoria and New Westminster.

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While Fletcher's contemporary Charles Sangster is often regarded as the father of Canadian poetry and as the first to show that a national poetry could be focused on Canadian landscapes in his *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* (1856), Fletcher's "Legend of the Isiamagomi," set in the Saguenay country, precedes this work by eighteen years. It may be fruitful to compare Sangster's vision of Trinity Rock—that "Samson of the Saguenay"—with Fletcher's description of a massive rock as a "conspicuous object" (122) as ways of engaging with specific landscapes. Nonetheless, any comparison of the two based on place will likely first encounter their differing approach to prosody. Where Sangster is more predictable in his masculine line endings and more frequently employs end-stop lines and prefers a masculine ending for enjambed lines, Fletcher runs contrary and presents greater variety in his metrical feet and attraction to enjambment. Any direct comparison, including my own in this introduction, will be opportunistic, and the opening stanzas of each poem perhaps reveal their prosodic differences more starkly, with Sangster's tendency toward strict iambic feet and paired rhymes matching masculine or feminine endings contrasting Fletcher's entirely masculine endings (in this instance) disrupted by enjambments and the shifting metrical feet or tending towards syllabic rather than accentual verse. The stanzas focused on the central rock in both poems mark out their difference in a more obvious comparison based on location, although their prosodic differences are less obvious than other comparisons would show. Sangster offers:

> Strong, eager thoughts come crowding to my eyes,
> Earnest and swift, like Romans in the race,
> As in stern grandeur, looming up the skies,
> This Monarch of the Bluffs, with kingly grace,
> Stands firmly fixed in his eternal place,
> Like the great Samson of the Saguenay,
> The stately parent of the giant race
> Of mountains, scattered—thick as ocean spray
> Sown by the tempest—up this granite-guarded way. (Sangster 1856, 58)

In contrast, for Fletcher we find:

> There is a rock, precipitous and bare,
> On the lake's northern shore. At distance spied
> It bears the aspect of a bird of air,

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> Vast, lone, and brooding by the water-side.
> The spell of old tradition doth abide
> On that hoar cliff, whose touching loneness brings
> A dimness to the eye for him who died
> Thereon, whose heart had yearned for unfound things,
> And broke at last, worn-out by crushed imaginings. ("Legend of the Isiamagomi," 124)

Both examples are in Spenserian stanzas, which makes direct comparison easy, but while Fletcher uses true rhymes in this example, most of the poem varies from this with half-rhymes and eye rhymes, and failed rhyme is almost as frequent as true rhyme. This is far less the case for Sangster. They also differ in the predictability of their feet, with Fletcher being more syllabic and Sangster more accentual. Sangster uses commas at line endings that may otherwise read as enjambed, and this emphasizes the end rhymes. Fletcher, by contrast, leans into the enjambment in a way that encourages the reader to consider his poem's syntax over its rhyme, which in turn emphasizes caesurae within lines rather than line endings. Here, "abide" must continue quickly to "On that hoar cliff" lest the syntax no longer track for the ear, as do both of the subsequent lines. But more notably, whereas Sangster reads the Canadian landscape through Biblical and classical references, Fletcher reads the landscape first on its own terms and then as the locus of Indigenous cultures presumably soon to be extinct, with his poem's unnamed Indigenous character providing a symbol of a people or a community rather than a specific individual. Ultimately, while both poets focus on landscape, Fletcher presents a wider set of references to more diverse literary traditions than Sangster (or his own contemporary, Charles Mair).[10]

Even in the more common division between the French and English traditions, ruptured in 1838, Fletcher offers complexity. He saw the rebellions in 1837 and 1838 as a "crime" but held deep sympathies with Lower Canada and the French, and he was a friend and correspondent of the artist and politician Joseph

10 See, for instance Mair's "Prologue to Tecumseh" by way of comparison, which shows their differing approach to line endings, with Mair's masculine endings contrasting to Fletcher's greater variation and tendency toward enjambment even while both focus on landscape, although they share a stronger interest in dropped line caesura. Mair's poem also gives a more general sense of landscape, and while his description of Indigenous peoples are more extensive in the poem, they tend toward the tropes of a "crafty breed . . . swart forms" as attackers and adversaries of the "pale-face enenee [*sic*]" (Mair 1868, 107).

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Légaré, who was arrested for his role in the rebellions. Fletcher also rejected anti-Catholic sentiments, attended events such as the visit of Cardinal Bedini, and transcribed speeches by the Pope in his commonplace books along with other religious materials outside of the Anglican faith. Fletcher's approach to the main political divisions of his time, like his approach to landscape, does not fit the ready categories that reflect his contemporaries. In other words, the academic models that create a basis for literary genealogies seem to be attentive to matters different from Fletcher's interests, so restoring him to Canadian literary history presses for subtle shifts in how we see and discuss Canadian literature.

Lampman's remarks about Fletcher's command of prosody points to another of Fletcher's differences from his other contemporaries. His poetry shows a great deal of familiarity with his American contemporaries and with the English Romantics, as does Sangster's, but Fletcher bases his work on a wide range of poetic forms in other languages, which may shape his tendency towards syllabic verse and away from iambic feet and the accentual focus of most other Canadian poets of the time. Apart from his attention to French syllabic poetry, Fletcher was as familiar with the trochaic tetrameter of Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* as he was with the alliteration of the *Poetic Edda* or the verses of the *Mahabharata*, and this appears in his late poems through a rhythmic variety that seems distinct from the comparisons one might wish to make to the early works of the Confederation poets. For instance, the shifting rhythms of Fletcher's *Nestorius: A Phantasy*, from 1892, contrast when set beside Duncan Campbell Scott's "The Voice and the Dusk," from his contemporary 1893 collection *The Magic House, and Other Poems*. Fletcher's poem opens with the following stanza, contrasted with Scott's first two stanzas beneath it:

> The old Nestorius, worn with many woes,
> Cast out, an exile, from the haunts of men,
> To all a stranger and an alien,
> And seeking only silence and repose,
> Passed to the sands of Egypt.
> Day by day,
> Wrapped in the splendour of the sunlit air,
> Which vestured, there, a world so strange and fair,
> He watched the mighty river fade away,
> For ever passing, and for ever there. (Fletcher, *Nestorius*, 190)

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The slender moon and one pale star,
A rose-leaf and a silver bee
From some god's garden blown afar,
Go down the gold deep tranquilly.

Within the south there rolls and grows
A mighty town with tower and spire,
From a cloud bastion masked with rose
The lightning flashes diamond fire. (Scott 1893, 5)

Both are essentially syllabic (pentameter and tetrameter, respectively), with Scott's far more accentual and his lines landing on a stressed syllable quite reliably and rooted firmly in an iambic rhythm. However, Fletcher's feet vary significantly in contrast and make his poetry more syllabic than accentual, perhaps showing a French influence (his commonplace books often transcribe French poetry) or at this late stage in his life his interest in Polish and Finnish poetry. While in this instance Fletcher favours the line break, much of the rest of his work prefers enjambment and favours a mid-line caesura in a manner less typical of Canadian poets of the time, as well as internal rhyme and alliteration, which are visible here. Fletcher's uncharacteristic end-stop lines in the above example also serve to stress the delay of the grammatical verb, a syntactic feature made more prominent by the single medial caesura.

Likewise, Lampman's poetry prior to his reading of Fletcher is more prone to a strict sense of rhythm and metrical feet with alternating masculine and feminine endings, as in his "Among the Millett," which opens his collection of the same title from four years prior to Fletcher's *Nestorius*:

The dew is gleaming in the grass,
    The morning hours are seven,
And I am fain to watch you pass,
    Ye soft white clouds of heaven. (Lampman 1888, 1)

While Lampman does go on to greater metrical complexity, and this is already anticipated in the same collection, it is difficult not to notice how quickly this

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shift occurs after his 1893 review of Fletcher's long poems, and how pervasive Fletcher's attention to rhythm and metrical variation is across his long life.

Perhaps the most striking contrast for contemporary readers comes in Fletcher's forms of representation. These complicate the struggles of Canadian literature with its prejudiced past that is most clearly embodied in Scott's twin roles as a national bard and the designer of the genocide of the residential schools for Indigenous children. There are standard racist tropes in Fletcher's poetry, including the Indigenous "wood-elves" in his 1838 poem "Legend of the Isiamagomi," although the idyllic Romanticism differs in kind from Scott's racism. Likewise, the colonial symbolism in Fletcher's "Notes of a Journey Through the Interior of the Saguenay Country" (1869), with its open acknowledgement of "the interests of colonization" (56), can be compared to his earlier poem as they overlap in locality:

> When the Red Cross replaced the Lilies, the vast interior fell into the hands of other powerful and exclusive trading companies, and became a terra incognita, a land of hobgoblins and chimeras dire, where ingress was always discountenanced and often forbidden. By degrees, the few traces of civilization disappeared; the voice of the missionary was heard at rare intervals; the quiet homestead, the cornfield and the garden, which the patient industry of the Jesuits had reclaimed from the wilderness, returned again to the dank vegetation of the forest. The dust gathered around their records, and their voices at length waxed faint and unreal as the utterances of a fairy tale. ("Notes of a Journey," 45)

This conflation of Indigenous territories with "wilderness" and "fairy tale" relies on familiar settler logics of "civilization" and "conversion" that end in genocide, as do Scott's "legendary land" and the infantilizing "frightened child" in his poem "The Half-Breed Girl." Fletcher's point, of course, is that our predecessors may have known far more than we do, and we should not treat knowledge-loss as a presumed ignorance. However, note as well the contrast between Fletcher's preference for the forest over "civilization" in his 1838 "The Legend of the Isiamagomi" set against Scott's "The Half-Breed Girl" from 1906, respectively (as well as Fletcher's early characteristic interest in internal rhyme, enjambment, and alliteration):

> A spacious temple, where the unchecked eye
> Through high and far-diverging vaults may see:

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An ancient temple, where all live to die,
And dies to nourish some fresh-springing floe:
A lasting temple? —No, this may not be!
The tide of cultivation rolls along
With ruthless haste, and stern utility
Shall silence soon the low, delicious song
Of the wood-elves that sit the forest-glades among. ("Legend of the Isiamagomi," 123)

She is free of the trap and the paddle,
The portage and the trail,
But something behind her savage life
Shines like a fragile veil.
. . .
A voice calls from the rapids,
Deep, careless and free,
A voice that is larger than her life
Or than her death shall be. (Scott 1906, 12, 14)

Where Scott's poem implicitly sets Indigeneity and tradition as the cause of torment, with freedom only coming from the girl's momentary turning away from her heritage, Fletcher presents quite the opposite with a modernity harmful to all and conflated with disease. While his poem does end with the "vanishing Indian" trope, it is more praiseful and respectful than Scott's. Both juxtapose an Indigenous community in decline against modernity, but for Fletcher that modernity is "ruthless" and "stern" in contrast to the poem's opening advice: "He that is weary of the din and toil / Of towns and commerce, let him go abroad / And ramble through the wilderness" so that "his better nature wake" (122). That is, the Indigenous protagonist of Fletcher's poem is a figure of reverence and well-being beset by a modernity intent on harming traditional ways, hence leading to the "vanishing" trope as this damage strikes—it is an image far different from Scott's in which the anglophone antagonist is invisible, gazing on others yet remaining unseen. Because of this elision, of being unseen like the subject in the passive voice, the suffering figure of Scott's "Half-Breed Girl" seems responsible for her own harm, as if her *being* itself were to blame for her torment and future

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death.[11] As Lisa Salem argues, the girl is haunted by her likely unknown white homeland because "it is present in her blood and in her dreams, causing her to question her 'savage life'" (1993, 107), and hence she is condemned to internal conflict in Scott's vision. Salem also draws on Robert McDougall's argument that Scott's "outer" life in the Department of Indian Affairs and the "inner" life of his art may work in an ideologically racist context, but that this supplies context rather than a basis for dismissal (McDougall 1980, 134–35). For McDougall, we enjoy a hindsight on the "Indian problem" that Scott did not, and Scott "administered federal government policy relating to the Canadian Indians" (1980, 139), although this is based on his critical edition of Scott's correspondence with the professor E.K. Brown. My approach is more to conflate rather than distinguish Scott's administrative actions with his depictions in writing, just as my attention to Salem falls to her interest in Scott's "depiction of mixed blood characters who are both defined and limited by the contradictory sets of characteristics which are inherent in the two strains of blood" such that, for Scott, "Native peoples possessed a 'savage' nature which was determined by their blood and which could be altered only through miscegenation" (Salem 1993, 107), which I understand as itself racist rather than a reflection of a racist ideological context. This is in line with Julia Boyd's assertion of "the relationship between his IRS [Indian Residential School] policy and his depictions of Indigenous children" (Boyd 2015, 144). For Boyd, Scott's imagery establishes "a fictionalized Canadian past in which the children are always already neglected and threatened" by their Indigeneity itself, such that it creates a "pseudomemory for Anglo audiences" that contributes to his IRS labours. The half-breed girl's internal conflict reflects not only the poem's form but Scott's labours as well. Poetically, it is a racism made all the more damaging by its secret nature. That Fletcher's vision precedes Scott's by nearly seven decades only makes Scott's genocidal racism even more

11 I am, here, reading against other critics such as Stan Dragland's detailed approach to the poem as based on a "tormented consciousness" and "divided souls" (1994, 197) or Lisa Salem's view of complex ideological conflict rather than simple racism as visible both in Scott's "'outer' life at the Department of Indian Affairs and his more private 'inner' life as expressed in his poetry and short fiction" (1993, 99). I am more inclined towards S. D. Grant's explicit recognition of Scott's genocidal vision. Grant argues that Scott's "sympathies lay with the women of mixed blood" only insofar as they are a necessary genocidal stage of suffering "caught between a savage heritage and the hope of future generations to be absorbed in a civilized white society" (Grant 1983, 25). Scott's vision longs for the modernity (itself genocidal) that Fletcher's laments.

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unacceptable and visible by comparison to a more empathic precursor, even while that precursor raises concerns as well. Recuperating Fletcher has the potential to change how we understand those who came after him, and while this does not excuse Fletcher's own biases, it does accentuate the fact that those who followed had a different, and ostensibly known, model and precursor available to them.

Further to this point, Fletcher casts his sympathies with the Indigenous communities in the same early poem, despite only very rarely naming them in his works and often falling into "elvish" Eurocentric tropes—only four years after his illness and his mother's death in the cholera pandemic, the central recurring trauma in his poetry, he sets modern life as the source of a "pestilence [that], in few short days, hath mown / What time, in years, would not have stricken down" ("Legend" 123), just as plague again drives *The Lost Island* fifty years later. The romanticized alternative is "the patriarchal woods" that "wear a temple's mien" (123) and give a viable spiritual life apart from urban modernity even while it is doomed to destruction by modernization. Likewise, where Scott's "half-breed girl" will either die of her ties to tradition or remain paralyzed between life and death from her internal division (life seems impossible for her), Fletcher's implicitly Indigenous protagonist instead dies of grief. Where both represent a break with traditional ways and can be regarded as sharing a "vanishing" trope, in Fletcher this is to be grieved: "their many-toned tongue" will be "bound" by modernity's cruelty, which will "silence soon the low, delicious song / Of the wood-elves" ("Legend" 123). Both conflate magic with Indigeneity, but Fletcher does not traffic in the malice that haunts Scott, nor does he condone the "vanishing" trope in which modernity is actively harming a linguistically complex and admired people, the same modernity that he is himself a part of but that also drives the urban malaise of which he complains and the pestilence that had for him recently caused the core trauma of his life: his own near death and the death of his mother from cholera. Fletcher became an agent of the modernity he laments and regards as damaging to himself and others but that he also saw as inevitable. This is to say, both poets document the harm occurring to Indigenous peoples, and both rely on tropes of the child and the fantastical, but where Scott uses a passive construction, as if the harm originates in the non-specific Indigenous peoples and traditions themselves rather than his concrete work to enforce the vision of his poetry on real people, Fletcher locates it in modernity and makes clear this is not where his own sympathies, health, and joy reside.

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Landscape

Despite Gordon Waldron's contention that "Scenery . . . is the most barren topic of poetry" (1896, 180), landscape, language, and culture are prevalent yet troubling notions in narratives of Canadian identity. Indeed, topography appears to be a central concern for the Canadian long poem, especially prior to the twentieth century, as discussed here by comparing Fletcher and Sangster. Yet, for Fletcher, these landscapes are surprisingly plural and distinctly hybrid. His descriptions of place cover the oldest cities in Canada and the newest provinces while integrating ancient and linguistically diverse allusions. His autobiographical works also include residencies in Canada's major cities and many smaller outposts. In addition to all this, his recollections of cultural life across Canada focus on richly overlapping communities rather than imposing a vision of national heterogeneity. He privileged variation rather than commonality. Moreover, as an important surveyor, Fletcher was intimately familiar with the Canadian landscape as something to be cherished and loved rather than represented as a terrifying "beyond." Northrop Frye's garrison doors are wide open, and the instinctive pathway is out into the world rather than merely circling the walls. Even where his late long poems fall into the pattern of conceiving of Canadian landscapes with references to elsewhere (the Nile and Atlantis), he reverses the typical pattern of, say, understanding the Fraser River as a variant by comparing it to the original Thames (reinforcing a colonial centre and periphery). Instead, Fletcher largely does away with gestures to the colonial centre and understands the Nile or Atlantis through comparison to the Fraser or Vancouver Island. His surveyor background and this inversion of the typical colonial pattern made it possible for Fletcher to blend the aesthetic traditions in Canadian poetry with a view that privileges landscape over plot and narrative.

Chaim Mazoff sets the stage for landscape literature in his study of the rhetoric of the Canadian long poem by holding that "the prolonged reliance on Classical form in the early Canadian topographical poem is not only an exercise in failed aesthetics; it is also a device in the employ of Empire in its ongoing battle against the French, the Aboriginal, the Americans, and the new land" (Mazoff 1997, 7). This is a position troubled by Fletcher's accounts of landscape as well as his insistence on linguistic and cultural pluralism and an expanded range of cultural references that rely on Classical models *as well as* the classical works of other traditions. Indeed, where A. B. De Mille and Duncan Campbell Scott both point to the importance of a "sympathetic knowledge of the Greek and Latin

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classics" (De Mille 1897, 184) as the basis for Roberts's prosody, Fletcher would seem to be an important precursor. Where Mazoff points to Jameson's political unconscious (1997, 9), if one takes the rhetoric of the long poem as a prosodic expression of the demands of the imperial social formation, Fletcher decidedly does not fit despite being an agent of empire as a surveyor. This may indeed be a rationale for why his works have been forgotten, like any impulse contrary to the actions of a censorious super-ego, political or otherwise—his absence is the parapraxis. If we read the rise of a national literary tradition in poetry through this frame of landscape, then setting Fletcher amidst (as well as prior to) Sangster and the Confederation poets shows other possibilities that either do not fit that rationale or become nonsensical. Where, for instance, Wordsworth's influence is prevalent, especially in nature poetry, Fletcher mentions him only once, in his essay "Icelandic Poetry" (1844b), and his commonplace books give preference to Byron and Shelley. While he copies extracts from Wordsworth, Shelley and Coleridge are more pervasive and Byron opens the book. For Mazoff's point on prosody, Fletcher's tendency towards syllabic rather than accentual metre likewise does not "fit" so either seems nonsensical or looks like a stylistic failure in comparison to the norms that he sees as serving empire—Fletcher is, however, highly accentual in his light verse, such as "The Broomstick." It is fascinating that perhaps the most obvious comparison among Fletcher's contemporaries would be to James De Mille, a professor of Classics at Acadia University and later English at Dalhousie University, who also had interests in Sanskrit and Persian (MacMechan 1924, 49)—tellingly, De Mille is remembered while Fletcher is not, perhaps specifically because his multilingual interests did not shape his creative work; De Mille's ties to academia may also have contributed.

In any case, Fletcher does not appear desublimated in Mazoff's study of the Canadian long poem, nor in Frank Tierney and Angela Robbeson's collection *Bolder Flights*, nor in David Bentley's *Mimic Fires*, all of which emphasize geography and landscape at the heart of Canadian poetry. It can only be speculated how an awareness of Fletcher's works may have altered their analyses. They built on a solid foundation that also excluded Fletcher while recognizing the importance of landscape. For the nineteenth century, only Fletcher's *The Lost Island* (and in only its 1889 edition) is recorded in C. C. James's *A Bibliography of Canadian Poetry* (1899, 22). James was one of the sources for David Sinclair's *Nineteenth-Century Narrative Poems*, in which Sinclair notes the challenges of writing a long poem in the nineteenth century with neither surety of audience nor publication. These pressures led to "the tradition of descriptive writing that

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had made the Canadian scene known to the old country" (1972, vi) specifically as "an account of England's valuable overseas territory which stresses the loyalty and sufferings of the inhabitants, the potential bounty to be drawn from the natural resources, the superiority of the settlers over the uncivilized native races, and their ability to tame and transform the land" (1972, vi). Fletcher's more cosmopolitan outlook and catholic diversity would hence not align with this kind of "pioneering theme" (1972, vii) despite his reliance on his own travels as documented in his prose. Fletcher never published for English readers, rejected the superiority of settlers, openly valued a culturally and religiously diverse community, and valued land "untamed"—he would mismatch the works in Sinclair's collection. Earlier still, he is likewise absent from E. H. Dewart's *Selections from Canadian Poets* and W. D. Lighthall's *Songs of the Great Dominion* on which Sinclair relies, although their nationalist focus and attention to historicization of national events would again make him mis-matched to their general tenor. He is absent as well from E. K. Brown's foundational *On Canadian Poetry*. Fletcher does not appear in George Woodcock's collection *Colony and Confederation: Early Canadian Poets and Their Backgrounds*, nor in Tom Marshall's *Harsh and Lovely Land* that followed in its path, nor later in Carl Ballstadt's collection of original works *The Search for English-Canadian Literature*.[12] Just as we can only speculate on how an awareness of Fletcher might have altered some critical works, something like Charles Heavysege's reliance on traditional prosody that renders him archaic also led to Northrop Frye's pinning on him "the central Canadian tragic theme . . . loneliness, the indifference of nature, and the conception of God as a force of nature" (Frye 1995, 173). Fletcher, however, anticipated this by thirty years in "Legend of the Isiamagomi" as well as Frye's sense of "the irresistible advance of capitalist civilization and its conquest of nature" (Frye 1995, 153) that he identifies in Isabella Valancy Crawford's *Malcolm's Katie* by fifty.

If Heavysege and Crawford are the two poets whom Woodcock sets as "outstanding . . . because in varying ways they stand *aside* from the rest" (1975b, 24), then Fletcher is a further and farther back aside. We might speculate how the state of contemporary criticism would look or what other topics it may have explored if he had been included in the University of Toronto Press's Literature of Canada series or the renaissance of critical studies of Canadian literature in

12 More prosaically, he is not even in Alan Twigg's encyclopedic *Twigg's Directory of 1001 B.C. Writers* nor its rebirth as BC Author Bank through *BC Book World* with more than 8,500 authors connected to the province.

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the 1970s. These may be grand suppositions, but at a minimum it outlines a rationale for Fletcher's inclusion in the early literary life of Canada and a consideration of the processes of canon-formation that rose from it. We also have a telling answer to Woodcock's provocation "Why is there a gap of almost fifty years after 'Malcolm's Katie' . . . before the next significant poems of that kind were published by E. J. Pratt in the 1920s" (1975b, 27). Fletcher's long poems narrow that gap. Even outside of Canadian literature, Fletcher may answer some questions; we need not rely solely on Ezra Pound's use of "Evanoe" in his 1911 "The House of Splendour" as an instance of the name (Pound's source is unknown) since it follows on Fletcher's use of the name more than two decades earlier in *The Lost Island*, potentially from the same etymological and poetic sources.[13]

Fletcher's late long poems written in British Columbia are richly allusive and draw on several literary and cultural traditions beyond those that we associate with his contemporaries. These polycultural and multilingual influences are also embedded in *and altered by* Canadian landscapes while concomitantly shaping Fletcher's prosody. These late long poems mark a change in Fletcher's poetic subjects, a change that developed from his experiences of the West and that anticipates one of the most prominent themes in Canadian literature: place. His poetry from the period of his residence in western Canada is deeply influenced by western landscapes, which overlap with classical subjects relating to the ancient world, but also beyond Greek and Latin traditions. His two surviving long poems both come from his residence in Western Canada, and they also show a striking increase in his attention to distinctly Canadian landscapes. As narrative poems, *The Lost Island* and *Nestorius: A Phantasy* entail extensive descriptions of the specific territories in which Fletcher resided at the time but under different names, moving from images of Vancouver Island through the Fraser Valley and into the British Columbia Interior.

Moreover, Fletcher blurs the classical interests of much of his early poetry with these landscapes, recasting British Columbia locations through Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Indian allusions. This blurring becomes a crucial element

13 It may be audacious to compare Fletcher to Pound and Eliot, but T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* was not the first English long poem to contemplate deeply on Sanskrit (a language both he and Fletcher studied), nor was Pound the first English language writer of a long poem to have studied written Chinese. Nor, for that matter, was Fletcher, but he does precede both Eliot and Pound.

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of his poetic project. However, the locales do not become intelligible through the Indo-European literary tradition so much as this tradition is modified and recast in order to align with its being situated in the western Canadian landscape. This reverses what might be the standard expectation in Canadian literature: an imitative tradition comparing Canadian localities to an imperial "home" in contrast to breakout works that see such places as their own (even amidst classical or Biblical allusions). Fletcher anticipates the latter early in his career and reverses the former. For Fletcher, contemplation and poetry come from leaving the garrison and going out into the world (not the reverse). In *The Lost Island* this departure from the garrison into the wider world comes because of disease. This echoes Fletcher's own early life and his early poem "Legend of the Isiamagomi," and that outer world assumes a reader familiar with its landscapes such that ancient and foreign locations become intelligible through that familiarity.

The Lost Island went through two editions in the space of six years, 1889 and 1895, but both follow on "a few copies of *The Lost Island* for private circulation among our friends" printed by George Wicksteed in 1887.[14] In the poem, images of the West Coast dominate, in sharp contrast to Fletcher's early works, but they are wrapped in classical and Indian references. I would argue, however, that these gestures to the ancient world are understood through the West Coast and not vice versa. The importance of the new landscape is made clear if we juxtapose his earlier essay "The Lost Island of Atlantis" (1865) with the fifty-six-stanza poem that developed out of the same source materials more than a quarter century later. In the essay, Fletcher pursues philological and classical interests exclusively, just as his poetry of this earlier period is predominantly classical in theme, tending towards Romantic moments of quiet contemplation, with the main exception being "Legend of the Isiamagomi." His concern in the essay is with the potential for linguistic recuperations as evidence for a lost civilization

14 I have, unfortunately, been unable to locate a copy of the original 1887 printing, but Wicksteed refers to it in a note (signed simply "W.") that appeared in the 1895 edition. "In 1887," he wrote, "I printed, with permission of the author, a few copies of *The Lost Island* for private circulation among our friends; and the satisfaction they expressed was so general, and so highly appreciative of Mr. Fletcher's scholarly and beautiful Poem, that, yielding to the request of some who had no copy or wished for more, I have been induced to edit a further limited number" (in Fletcher 1895, 4). Attribution of editorship to Wicksteed is based on the inscription in the CIHM microfilm copy of the 1889 edition: "with the compliments of the author and of his editor GW Wicksteed" dated 30 April 1889. Fletcher's *Nestorius* is also dedicated to Wicksteed.

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as well as a historical survey of classical references to Atlantis and potential origins. Moreover, his method is primarily academic in this work, rather than an expression of creative energies or an interaction with the environment around him. This importance of classical allusions and source materials is prominent throughout his life, but in his last two long poems, and the earlier "Legend of the Isiamagomi," these classical references take a secondary position to a recognizable and important Canadian landscape: a landscape that makes its role in the poetry felt by dominating the imagery, and a landscape that should be familiar to Canadian readers from the West. In other words, in Fletcher's late poetry, the erudite allusions and contexts deepen. The ancient past is articulated through Canada (rather than vice versa), and Canada is articulated only through this multiplicity of references to other cultures.

For instance, in *The Lost Island*, the reader encounters a type of landscape more developed in detail and scope than most of Fletcher's other poetry from the previous fifty years:

> Along the beach, beneath the massy wall,
> The great sea rippled drowsily: afar
> The headland glimmered, like a misty star,
> Wearing a cloud wreath for a coronal;
> And all the air was filled with tremulous sighs
> Borne from the waste of waters, musical,
> Yet dreamy soft, as some old Orphic hymn,
> That floated up, what time the day grow dim,
> From Dorian groves, and forest privacies. (165)

The fog-covered headland resembles the description given of Victoria and New Westminster in Sir Sandford Fleming's *From Westminster to New Westminster* (1876, 320). In addition to this possible allusion, "Dorian groves, and forest privacies" that sit adjacent to "The great sea [that] rippled drowsily" recall an image of the Pacific far more readily than any experiences he may have gleaned from Toronto, Québec City, or Montréal, especially as high mountain ranges become prominent in subsequent stanzas. These are not mountains akin to his "Notes of a Journey Through the Interior of the Saguenay Country." The image of "Sunshine and clouds, mountains and sea" (168) adjacent to each other recalls the Coast Mountains rising behind Vancouver or northeast on the mainland from Victoria. The phrase itself is nearly a trope of the West Coast tourism industry

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in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, given the newness of these landscape descriptions to Fletcher's works, images that appear only after his move to Vancouver Island, the distinctly western Canadian nature of these images caught among classical allusions is striking. Moreover, it is the classical material that is subjected to change here, inheriting as it does a landscape that it cannot recast. That is, the coast is not cast as *like* Atlantis, but rather, Atlantis adopts the traits that make *it* like coastal British Columbia. This only intensifies when he later identifies the geological rock types through which the river cuts.

Furthermore, the two children of the plague-stricken island city of Atlantis, the primary protagonists Eiridion and Thya (so much like his own experience of plague and parental loss), retreat from the port of Atlantis to the wilderness of the mainland. This journey leads them to find classical figures, but they only do so against what appears to be a Canadian backdrop. In the classical frame,

> Thya exclaimed, 'Oh father, oh my lord,
> What awful shape hangs there, with brow all scored,
> As if with flame of lightning from on high,
> Yet unsubdued, and wearing as a king
> The garment of his silent agony?'
> To whom the Marut: 'This is Themis' son,
> The Titan, who, for love to mortals shewn,
> Is doomed, by Zeus, to penal suffering.' (176)

Prometheus is clearly the subject, especially through the reference to flame, his silent agony, and his love for mortals. However, to reach this classical figure, the twins Eiridion and Thya are led by an Indian Marut (a storm god) through a land completely unlike Greece, which Fletcher describes in the thirty-first stanza with their journey through the mountains:

> Far to the North they saw the boundless plain,
> Where roved the mammoth. There, in dusky bands,
> Innumerable as the ocean sands,
> They wandered, with white tusks and shaggy mane,
> Hugest of living beasts that looked on man.
> So came they to a rugged mountain chain,
> Gloomy and dark, a wilderness forlorn,

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> So wild, it seemed the world's extremest borne,
> Withered and grey with some unending ban. (175–76)

Otto von Kotzebue gave the first descriptions of mammoth skeletons from the west coast of what is now Alaska in 1821, sparking numerous popular images of mammoths in the northern Canadian plains. Moreover, S. Sturton discussed mammoth remains on the West Coast in his paper delivered on 2 January 1863 before the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec (Sturton 1863, 103), a paper Fletcher probably heard and almost certainly read in the society's *Transactions*, as he was actively publishing in that publication and presenting his own work at the society while serving as its council secretary, all in the same year as Sturton.

Moreover, this rugged mountain chain, so like the one Fletcher traversed on the new rail system joining New Westminster to eastern Canada in 1886, has another peculiarly western Canadian association: "With balmy odours of sweet-scented pines; / Where, in clear blue, the white clouds sailed aloft" ("Lost" 174). The Edenic imagery is not new to Fletcher, and even as early as May 1845 in the *Literary Garland* of Montréal, he casts "the glad freshness of that summer dawn" in "Tempe's vale" ("Medea" 157). Yet, the classical images of Edenic bliss in this early poem are without a specific landscape apart from the most general outlines implicit in the allusion. Fletcher's encounter with western Canada, then, appears to have had a marked influence on his later poetic landscapes such that they transform classical sites into a reflection of dramatic British Columbia locations.

The descriptions in his earlier work instead focus on the metaphoric moon and the emotional state of the dreamer recollecting a "bright land wherein I loved to dwell!" ("Medea" 159). The nature of the loved land is empty, and its landscape is without articulated features. Even in September 1844, in his imaginative inhabitation of Dante's exile from Florence (a specific site), Fletcher recalls the "shady privacies / Of glen and grove, where formerly abode / Old Tuscan sybils and haruspices" ("Dante" 154–55). Yet, this landscape is not allocated such vivid descriptions in his later works written from the West Coast. The specificity of Florence supplies names and allusions, but the imagined landscape does not interact with the imminence of Fletcher's lived experiences in Canada. More specifically, the Arno of Florence is not transformed into the St. Lawrence, and the potential for a Canadian image of the landscape from the past, or even a connection between Fletcher's experienced and imagined environments, does not occur. The allusions do not lead the reader to inhabit Canadian locales in

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new ways, while this is the case in his later works. This blurring of landscape and allusion in his later poetry, with landscape dominating, remains striking even now, more than a century later.

Furthermore, in *The Lost Island*, the Marut who guides Thya and Eiridion in their journey is, as Fletcher explains in his notes to the poem, tied to India: "The Maruts, gods of the wind, are described in the Veda as Sons of Indra" (note to stanza 22, 186). Likewise, the lake they find in this landscape—a type of landscape Fletcher never described prior to his move to the west coast—is "Manasa, a sacred lake and place of pilgrimage, encircled by lofty mountains and lying between Mount Kaitâsa and the Himalayas. It is frequently alluded to in Hindu poetry" (note to stanza 36, 187). He draws on Prometheus and Ulysses in the same poem, overlapping them with Daitya in the thirty-eighth stanza. Defining "Daitya (a son of Diti)" as "a demon, an enemy of the gods," Fletcher explains, "The incident here introduced is adapted from an episode of the Mahabharata" (note to stanza 38, 187). This cultural combination of Indian and Greek literary materials is provocative on its own, suggesting as it does a pluralist history. His son Sidney's later travel narrative about a canoe voyage on the river to Alouette Lake and Stave Lake offers similar images based in Stó:lō territory ("Autobiography," in Fletcher [2022]). Yet even before we as readers imaginatively inhabit Canadian locales that are being described contiguously with these allusions, Fletcher has disallowed a culturally univocal discourse about this space. Before we can recognize the landscape as British Columbia, the multiple allusions and references have already made the poem culturally plural. Furthermore, once the landscape takes precedence, we see it altering our vision of an Indo-European literary tradition rather than this tradition obscuring the territory as some kind of screen for the projections of the imagination of the Western viewer. This is, simply, a reversal of the expected colonial logic: understanding "here" by making it more like "there" (the colonial centre). For Fletcher, instead, the prized ancient source material only takes on a shape and form through reference to the familiarity of "here."

Perhaps most strikingly, the long poem was written after Fletcher came to Victoria on Vancouver Island, crossing Canada by rail to do so. He then moved to New Westminster to live with his son Sidney, and then visited even further up the Fraser River into the Fraser Canyon where his youngest son Cecil lived in Yale (Cecil had moved with his father to Victoria from Québec City and then relocated to Yale). The family later owned farmland as far as Abbotsford, and easy travel as far as Yale was made possible by riverboats. By recognizing this

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landscape as it also recurs in the recollections of his family, Fletcher in effect describes his own journey in two stanzas of *The Lost Island*, while his allusions have, as noted above, blurred Greek and Indian classical materials, placing Prometheus near the Indus River:

> Silent in thought, the four held on their way
> Through sandy wastes, past Sindhu's rapid stream;
> Till rose, among the hills, the distant gleam
> Of Manasa: and here they made their stay.
> It was a lake secluded, in deep calm,
> From worldly tumult, and the troublous day,
>
> Where peace unbroken reigned: so still and cool,
> Here might repose the heart with anguish full,
> And every sorrow here might find its balm.
> At length, refreshed with welcome rest, they rose,
> Crossing the Hima mountains, home of snow,
> The stony girdle of the world, and so
> Entered on Aryavartha's sacred close.
> Land of the marvellous! Here, being's tide
> Swept on exultant, through the long repose
> Of silent centuries: and glowing life
> Came forth, with thousand forms of beauty rife,
> On flowery plain and shady mountainside. (177–78)

Again, Fletcher's allusions blur Greek and Indian classical materials, here placing Prometheus near the Indus River.

These scenes are not, however, the only or even the most persuasive instances of Canadian landscapes integrated into Fletcher's classical poetry, nor is the Fraser River's displacement of the Indus the most striking river image. In his subsequent long poem, *Nestorius: A Phantasy*, Fletcher again takes up the trope of a grand river with an aging man contemplating life on its shore, and his descriptions of landscape increasingly clarify his overlapping mixture of lived experiences and allusions. At this time living in New Westminster on West 3rd Avenue next to Queen's Park, looking down to the Fraser River as an elderly man troubled by gout, Fletcher opens his poem in a way that conflates himself with Nestorius:

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The old Nestorius, worn with many woes,
Cast out, an exile, from the haunts of men,
To all a stranger and an alien,
And seeking only silence and repose,
Passed to the sands of Egypt.
Day by day,
Wrapped in the splendour of the sunlit air,
Which vestured, there, a world so strange and fair,
He watched the mighty river fade away,
For ever passing, and for ever there.

Haply he found, in that mysterious stream,
Some semblance to the current of his life:
Placid, at first, it rose, and far from strife,
Cradled in lotus-blossoms, with the gleam
Of dewdrops sparkling in the morning sun;
Then through bare rocks of basalt, dark and grim,
Impetuous forced its way, with widened brim
Until, at last, its stormy life-course done,
It sank in silence. It was so with him. (*Nestorius* 190–91)

In the first stanza, the Keatsian technique of deferring the completion of the independent clause (here until the fifth line) draws attention to the stylistics of this passage and is a formal trait visible in his works across seven decades. However, this should not cause readers to overlook the more basic story of an elderly man relocating to a new land in order to contemplate "the mighty river" as it rises from an Edenic and placid origin, impetuously blasts through basalt, and then finds rest in the ocean—much like Fletcher's own spirit. Experienced travellers might notice that the Nile itself does not cut through basalt until far into Upper Egypt and Ethiopia, away from the ostensive setting of the poem in Lower Egypt. Basalt is also not associated with the Nile in any significant literary way. The basalt used in the construction of the pyramids was quarried from the northern edge of the Fayoum Depression, then shipped by boat across what was once a lake, and only subsequently carried down the Nile. Likewise, most basalt in Egypt is found quite distant from the Nile. However, as Fletcher would have surely known, being a longstanding executive member of the Geographical

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Society of Quebec and possessing demonstrated familiarity with geological discourse and being a respected authority on it, there was another more immediate river to his experience, a river that *does* visibly cut "through bare rocks of basalt, dark and grim" after rising from placid origins and, just before it reaches the ocean, crashes dramatically through such a landscape. It is a river with which his family was intimately familiar: the Fraser River, from the area of Hope and Yale into the interior but with basalt formations clearly visible from Abbotsford and Mission where the slack tide from the river's mouth reaches. As I recall from my own childhood summers in the area, the exposed basalt is one of the most visually memorable feature of this terrain. Basalt rock "dark and grim" and the "Impetuous forced" river crashing through it is the core feature of the Fraser River from Hell's Gate through Yale and Emory Creek until the opening of the valley begins downstream from Hope. Fletcher's description does not match the Egyptian landscape, but it does capture perfectly the image of the riverboat trip from New Westminster to Yale, where all of his sons visited and his youngest son Cecil, who moved West with him, lived.

In this context, Nestorius, the banished Patriarch whose heresy was to argue the Virgin Mary carried the human Jesus rather than God, has another very West Coast experience. In Egypt, ostensibly, he finds an oasis near the river that cuts though "bare rocks of basalt," although the environment now seems more plainly akin to a lush rain forest than the mouth of the Nile:

> Around them closed the tall columnar trees,
> Giants in growth, through whose interstices,
> High-branched, with lofty crowns of foliage,
> Clear moonlight fell, and chequered here and there,
> The heavy gloom with points and lines of light.
> Here they slept, through the soft autumnal night,
> Till morning came. (*Nestorius* 195–96)

Again, amidst allusions to an archaic fourth- and fifth-century heretical Patriarch of Constantinople, which also overlap with a narration of travels through the Nile Basin and ancient Egyptian sites, Fletcher manages to integrate distinctly West Coast imagery into his Classical preoccupations and his Romantic narrative style. In addition to this stylistic wedding, he parallels his own autobiographical journey from the "centre" of Canada to its periphery, just as his protagonist departs Constantinople to spend his old age beside another distant

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river. As with the striking resemblance to Vancouver Island in *The Lost Island* and the nearest mainland to Atlantis strongly resembling the Coast Mountains, the Nile in *Nestorius* closely resembles the Fraser River. Most importantly, however, it is the Fraser that displaces images of the Nile, rather than Classical notions of the Nile that displace the real landscape that spreads out before the author in his New Westminster home.

The land, in most examples of this period, would not only be empty but would be most akin to familiar imperial landscapes, such as the Thames or the Seine, and hence amenable to Western control and reconstruction. The most overt instance would be the names of these locations and the brutal fact of imperial inscription that overlays them like a palimpsest: New Westminster, as in Fleming's *From Westminster to New Westminster*; Surrey; Abbotsford, which must have brought to mind Sir Walter Scott; Queen's Park, for Queen Victoria; Victoria itself; and so forth. Indigenous territories in British Columbia are renamed to elide Indigenous peoples and replace them with a settler logic of a Eurocentric topos. I write this on "Old Yale Road" in "Surrey" that is "South Westminster" even though the Katzie and Kwantlen peoples' names and territorial acknowledgements are now recognized here. In this context, it is important that rather than simply imposing a colonial understanding of the Fraser River through a colonial gaze that reinscribes the Thames over it, Fletcher takes the Nile and re-imagines *the Nile* through the image of the Fraser River. This is to say, the Fraser River of British Columbia recasts Fletcher's understanding of the Nile in Western literature rather than the typical colonial approach in which European sites or materials constitute the schema for interpretation of colonized space.

Fletcher, whether by intention or not, disturbs a pattern that was endemic in his contemporaries. He casts Western narrative conventions, such as classical texts, as intelligible only through a genuine engagement with the "foreign" landscape and a sincere attempt to see it as it exists without rewriting it via another colonizing culture's position. His landscapes are also inhabited by non-European peoples (Indigenous, Chinese, and settlers from elsewhere). For Fletcher's works, this linguistic and cultural plurality is tied to his life in Québec and his experiences in West Coast landscapes and derives from his experiences during the creation of Canada as a modern nation. While he was an anglophone writer wrapped in the beliefs of his day and lived in the anglophone community, he also represents the first breaths of a greater diversity in Canadian literature and makes readers ask how that may have developed differently. This gives room for

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further discussion, but Fletcher's implicit desire to include Indigenous languages in this diversity (his own works notably exclude English myths) and explicit ambition to integrate a global world literature tradition also offers a prospect for a more inclusive dialogue than has typically been seen among his contemporaries.

Summation

These are the challenges that reading Fletcher and including him in our history present to Canadian literature. Reading him demands that we at least consider how we might reread the Confederation poets differently (and much of the nineteenth century for that matter). That we read them with higher expectations. That we read them as having *known* of other models of engagement that have problematic yet nuanced and empathy-oriented modes of plural engagement. Reading Fletcher also demands that we consider Classical and Romantic poetic influences somewhat differently, in particular by abandoning an Anglocentric vision for these modes. It is not a *Brown Romantics* (Chander 2017) nor an anticipation of the Bigger Six Collective, but it is still different. Fletcher's hierarchy of languages may seem racist, particularly his antipathy to written Chinese, but English fares little better as an analytic language, and the poetic traditions to which he alludes in his own poetry point outward to other world literature traditions in Sanskrit, Finnish, Icelandic, and Polish, among so many others, and make these a part of Canadian literature. For today, this means these are not "new voices" as they reappeared in the later twentieth century; they are already long-familiar voices, long a part of Canadian literature. Lest it seems this is an unproblematic approach, his published "Letter on British Columbia" deplores the local population. He dislikes the Chinese population based on their language even while describing them as honest, trustworthy, and preferable to new English and American settlers; he gives only "the noble red man of the forest" for Indigenous peoples of the Coast, which is reductive and unelaborated as a nostalgic Romantic trope; but he then describes the British population as "angular and prejudiced" and the miners of 1858 as dishonest drunkards, among whom the Eastern Canadian emigrants arrive as newcomers ("Letter on British Columbia," 77). Likewise, his travels in the Saguenay have him meet Paul Duchesnes, whose "wife was an Indian half-breed, and his children had all of them a decided Tartar physiognomy" ("Notes of a Journey" 55), although he likewise describes Paul by his features and praises his temperament and intelligence, in general preferring the Indigenous and Francophone people he meets on the journey to those who

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live in the urban world. For our sense of Canadian literature of the period, Fletcher's works are transformative in their cultural and linguistic concerns and attention to Canadian literature as a world literature, even with his integration of racist elements of his time.

Reading Edward Taylor Fletcher transformed my life as well, giving me a model of curiosity and capaciousness that I did not otherwise have as a first-generation student and academic. I would argue there is nothing less at stake in Canadian literature. The careful and nuanced attention given to any and every exculpatory pathway into Duncan Campbell Scott and the Confederation poets now has a transformed precursor that demands attention and scrutiny for other possibilities rather than a simple historical relativism. In particular, Scott's embracing of cultural genocide and its reflection in his poetry does not arise without context nor without the voice of a precursor offering a profoundly different vision—not an unproblematic vision, but a very different one more amenable to dialogue. Hugh McLennan's *Two Solitudes* now sits under the shadow of prevalent pluralist body of previous literary work and a sense of cultural and linguistic diversity within the literary community. The policy of multiculturalism under Trudeau in the 1970s is also now to be thought of as a tradition with a very long precursor of sorts stretching back before Confederation and Canadian multiculturalism. That is, multiculturalism is not only an aspiration from that moment in the 1970s but is also a recuperation of a nascent already-existing tradition in Canadian society and literature. Fletcher, as the British-born son of a British captain, openly valued the francophone community, or at least the well-educated community and clergy, explicitly favoured religious pluralism without a dominant sacred community, wrote in a fashion that arguably attends to the syllabic style of French prosody, and embodied linguistic pluralism—his views on race are more Romantic, which is to say they are a misrepresentation, but he specifically avoids the prevalent intergroup bigotries. The racist exclusion of the *Komagata Maru* incident intensifies its shame on Canada when we know that the praise and translation of Indian cultures three decades earlier *in the same place* is a part of Canadian literature praised by no less than Archibald Lampman. The idea of a "trans-Canada" paradigm must also be moved backward in time, not only for a literary figure writing from coast to coast but also for his inclusion of the named and unnamed communities that shaped his works. Fletcher, amidst his faults and flaws and failures, demanded a Canada that was linguistically and culturally plural; open to engagement across diverse cultures while acknowledging difference rather than standardizing Canadian identity into

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a hegemonic Anglocentrism; rooted in landscape; existing beside Indigenous communities that Canadian modernity harms but should instead centre; and grown from the human experiences of trauma and loss that might lead to a sense of sharing humanity's painful struggles with others who also struggle and suffer.

My proposal, then, is that by recuperating Fletcher's nineteenth century works, modern readers have potential avenues for understanding voices that did not agree with the hegemonic colonial narrative tropes of the period and its imagery of a *terra nullius* that could be understood only through Eurocentric and specifically Anglocentric instrumentalizations of nature that ultimately alienate the reader from the environment and submit Indigenous voices to colonial erasure. More speculatively, we may consider how his less accentual approach to poetic metre might relate to his interests in French poetry and that of other traditions, just as we cannot know exactly how extensively he read in French, although his commonplace books transcribe selections from Victor Hugo's *Les misérables* (1862) some pages before a note dated to 1886 and a news clipping dated to 1888. His transcriptions in Sanskrit (in Devanāgarī script) and translations of very brief excerpts from the *Hitopadeśa* (drawing from Müller's German translation as a bridge) likewise set him aside from his Canadian poetic contemporaries. While Fletcher does not leave us with translations from Indigenous languages and has only fleeting references to Indigenous peoples, he also appears to privilege their linguistic complexity, even though this leads to problematic displacements of representations of Indigeneity by other often effaced or elided minority populations and his dislike for purportedly simple languages. This vision is deeply problematic yet also engenders an openness to other voices that is quite different from many of Fletcher's contemporaries.

I found Fletcher by coincidence, but I choose to think of this less as a random surprise than as the demand Fletcher's works place on his readers. I read the writing directly from his hand, and those commonplace books demanded that I discover more. As I did so, those published works demanded I reconsider how I had thought of his contemporaries. This book collects the results of that demand, as does the digital companion volume of his non-fiction prose, *"The Sealed Book of the Future": The Collected Prose of Edward Taylor Fletcher* (the division is between his autobiographical work and poetry here in contrast with his historical, professional, and quasi-academic essays in the latter, despite the temptation to set his essay on Atlantis with his long poem, for example). The works he penned across seven decades of Canadian history also make a demand of readers today, whether as a historical instance of a rising literary community

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or as a voice meriting recovery for its own sake. If this collection shares any of those demands, it is a sense of calling for attention, and that such attention be diffuse and broad. Amidst his complications, culpabilities, and role in Canada's mixed praiseful and harmful histories, Fletcher is a strong voice demanding that the future of Canada shift its centre: that no one community, language, or set of cultural practices and references attain to the ideological purity of being a standard of national culture. When we centre the experiences, literatures, languages, and practices of diverse and at times unexpected communities, we are not only anticipating the Canada we desire but are echoing a Canadian literary practice begun nearly two centuries ago that did not develop as it may have—however, that practice has a body of literature and thought behind it. It has failures, and it should not be accepted uncritically, but it is also part of our inherited legacy, and it should provoke us as readers to judge the subsequent voices by a higher standard, seeking more moral justice, more decentering and re-centering, and reflecting more pluralism.

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Travel Writing and Reminiscences

Memoranda of Events Which Occurred in the Latter Part of July 1834, at York Cottage Near Quebec

1885

On Thursday, 24 July 1834, I dined with Mr. Hacker at his house in St. Stanislas Street.[1] I there ate some boiled peas, which I think were the cause of my subsequent illness. After leaving the office, I went home as usual. Shortly afterwards young May Horn came out with my Father; he met me in the passage and shook hands very warmly with me. We two then took a stroll together, going out on the road towards Ste. Foy's, turning up by a crossroad beginning where Mr. A. Simpson's Brick Cottage now stands, and returning by the St. Louis Road. In the evening we played backgammon together, and when we had done, my father and mother sat down to play. Wine having been brought in, I took a glass of cold port wine and water, with sugar. As soon as I had swallowed it, I felt a dead and heavy sensation in the stomach, as though the digestion powers had ceased to act. I went into the open air and moved my limbs—but to no purpose; and I went to bed with an indefinable dread of the future.

When morning came, I was seriously unwell; having been troubled throughout the night with cramps and violent purging. However I managed to get up and dress myself and laid down on the sofa below; spasms beginning to seize me, I went up stairs again, and laid down on the bed in my father's room. My father and mother then came up, and asked me what was the matter with me?

1 Mr. Hacker is likely Fletcher's cousin Frederick Hacker, the architect with whom he partnered. The home Hacker designed for John O'Meara in 1834 was also located in St. Stanislas Street.

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I told them I felt the cramps—and never shall I forget the mute look of intelligence that passed between them! They then knew I had the Asiatic cholera. I was put instantly to bed, and made to drink half a tumbler of spiced brandy—a medicine highly recommended by our opposite neighbour, Miss Martin. This brandy, I think saved my life: for, it being the heat of summer, and a blanket or two having been laid on the bed, a violent perspiration broke out over my body and limbs. In about an hour Dr. Douglas came up and prescribed some medicine. While he was in the room, my father came in and said in a choking voice, "Well, doctor, how is my boy?" Dr. Douglas said that I was in a profuse perspiration. Mr. Hacker soon afterwards came up, and said, "Well, Ned my boy, how are you?" He came to my bedside, and I saw by his look that he thought my case hopeless.

This forenoon was the crisis of my fate; but my excellent constitution, uninjured by excess of any kind, combined with the powerful stimulant, were, under Heaven, victors over the disease. During this period I suffered much—not only from violent spasms, but also from a raging thirst that was almost insupportable, which is not to be wondered at, considering the heat of the weather, the brandy and blankets, and the nature of the disease itself. Dr. Douglas, however, very properly forbid my taking a large draught of liquid, only allowing a spoonful at a time.

Towards the afternoon there were strong hopes of my recovery: The Doctor saying that the only thing then to be feared was the fever which generally followed. My dear mother was almost rapturous with joy and watched unceasingly near me. The cramps began to abate and before night ceased altogether. Mr. Henniker, young Mimee, May Horn and Mr. Hacker were at my bedside at different times. At nightfall, the feather bed on which I lay was exchanged for a straw one, which was far more cool and pleasant.

Saturday morning (the 25th) dawned and found me better. The disease had taken a turn and I was rapidly recovering. The doctor visited me in the forenoon and recommended some chicken broth. Mrs. Murphy paid us her usual weekly visit with her poultry, so that the broth was under way in no time. I improved throughout the day. Young Horn was sitting by my bed side most of the day, reading some of Farquhar and Congreve's comedies,[2] and often laughing aloud at their equivocal witticisms.

2 William Congreve (1670–1729) and George Farquhar (1677–1707) were both Restoration dramatists.

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Sunday came: and still I was getting better. Young May Horn took his leave today and shook me by the hand, saying, "Good-bye, I wish you well." The weather was rather cooler, and there was a delightful breeze.

Monday the 28th. Little of importance occurred this day. Fine weather and my health gradually improving.

The following day also passed over quietly. Night came. But about midnight, or perhaps afterwards, I heard my mother, in a faint voice calling to my sister Anna and directing some medicine to be prepared as "she felt very ill." The mournful and unnatural tone of her voice, breaking thus suddenly on the silence around, struck on my ear like a death knell. She got rapidly worse. I could hear her retching in a dreadful manner. Dr. Douglas came up not long afterwards.

At about daybreak on the 30th, I was moved from the large bed in the front room. My mother was carried to the bed I had left—and never rose from it again! —From the room where I was (my sisters') I could hear many feet moving lightly backwards and forwards and felt convinced that she was in extreme danger. However, during the forenoon Mr. Hacker came in and told me she was better, but it was a transient gleam—she got worse afterwards. Drs. Skey and Douglas attended on her, and the former came occasionally into the room where I was, to wash his hands, as he was afraid of contagion. For myself, the disease was leaving me rapidly. In the afternoon I got up and went downstairs. I entered the room where my mother lay: but my father caught me by the arm and led me out. I saw my mother lying on her left side, with her face towards the windows. She looked as though asleep, and the expression of her whole attitude was that of tranquil repose. I left the room; and never saw her more.

At last I went to bed. But my thoughts were confused, and, I think, slightly delirious. At about nine, or perhaps later, my eldest sister came in, and said, "She's dying, Ned" and burst into tears. Mrs. Hacker shortly afterwards came in and confirmed what Anna had said.

On the morning of the 31st I saw the coffin lying by the side of her bed. Then the assistants came and screwed it down.

At nine o'clock the funeral left the house. Mr. Grassett officiating. I did not accompany it, being too weak. My father returned about two hours afterwards and embraced us all.

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She was interred in the St. Matthew's Burial ground, near the north wall on St. John's Street.[3]

Her death was a heavy blow to us all. Her bright and cheerful temper made her the life and soul of our home. In maternal care she was unwearied. Throughout my long illness (eczema) of the winter of 1830–31 her attention was unremitting. In the morning, before any were up, she would come to my room, and perform all the kindly duties which her affection prompted. She is gone. And to me it is a painful thought that she died in saving me, and most probably took from me the disease which carried her off.

Copied from the old draught, made at the time.

Edward Taylor Fletcher
Quebec, 12 September 1885

3 Today the church is now Bibliothèque Claire-Martin and the cemetery is renamed Cimetière Anglican Saint-Matthew.

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Notes of a Journey Through the Interior of the Saguenay Country

1869

It may appear paradoxical to say that the interior of the Saguenay country was better known two hundred years ago than it is now; but such appears to be the fact. The Jesuit missionaries seem to have traversed every part of this vast region, lying to the northwest of the lower St. Lawrence. In 1647, Father Jean Duquen, missionary at Tadousac, ascending the Saguenay, discovered the Lake St. John, and noted its Indian name, Picouagami, or Flat Lake.[1] He was the first European who beheld that magnificent expanse of inland water. In 1661, Pierre Bailliquet, also a missionary, entered the Labrador country in rear of Mingan. In the same year, on the 1st of June, the Fathers Gabriel Drueillet and Claude Dablon left Tadousac, journeying towards the northwest, or Mer du Nord, and reached Nekouba, called in their narrative "le milieu des deux mers, de celle du Nord et de celle de Tadousac."[2] The latitude was determined to be of 20′, and the

1 Born in 1603, the Jesuit missionary Jean du Quen arrived in Québec on 17 August 1635, initially serving at the Jesuit mission and school at Sillery, near Québec City. In 1642, he was placed in charge of the recently established Jesuit mission at Tadoussac, located at the confluence of the Saguenay River with the St. Lawrence. In 1647, with the aid of two Indigenous guides, he travelled up the Saguenay River past the trail to Lac Kénogami and on to Lac Piékouagami, which he rechristened Lac-Saint-Jean on a return visit in 1652. He died in 1659 of a fever brought on by a contagious disease.

2 Druillettes and Dablon sought a waterway in 1661 to reach Hudson's Bay from the Saint Lawrence River up the Saguenay River (Cooke and Holland 1978, 32; Dawson 1905, 383–84). Fletcher is relying on Dablon's "Journal de premier Voyage fait vers la Mer du Nord" from the *Relation de la Nouvelle* (1662, 13–19). The quotation in French is from Dablon (1662, 17): "the middle of two seas, that of the North and that of Tadousac."

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longitude 305°10′ or 54°50′ W. of Ferro. This Nekouba is spoken of as a place of some importance, being the site of an annual fair, to which the Indians came from far and near. The soil receives but scant praise: the mosquitoes, it appears, are starved out for want of nourishment. "C'est ici un sol aride et sabloneux; nous trouvons vrai ce que nous disoient nos sauvages, que quand nons serions parvenus icy, nous aurions passé le pais des Maringoins, des Mousquites ou Cousins, qui n'y trouvent pas de quoy vivre. C'est l'unique bien de ces deserts, de ne pouvoir pas même nourrir ces petites bestioles, fort importunes aux hommes."[3] Finally, during the summer of the year 1672, the P. Charles Albanel, passing by the route of Lake St. John, the Chomouchnan, and the great Mistassini Lake, succeeded in reaching the edge of the Mer du Nord, and saw the British flag flying on the shore of Hudson's Bay. And these were but a few of many. In every direction, up every stream and watercourse, in the face of all difficulties, the cross was carried by hands that never tired, with unwearied zeal and most patient suffering, through all the slow martyrdom of their thorny path, in heat and cold, through snow and marsh; consorting with savages and housing with filth, and misery, and famine, these brave men persevered to the end, content to suffer all things, if only they might save a soul alive. And who, in view of such deeds, will not say that Canada also has had its heroic age, its warriors of the cross, its saints and martyrs, and that side by side with the martyrologium and *Acta Sanctorum* of the old world, we may place without fear our *Relations des Jésuites*, the simple and pathetic narrative of the Jesuit Fathers?[4]

We have fallen on altered times. Only occasionally, and then "*haud passitus æquis*," do we tread in the footprints of a bygone age.[5] It is but a few years since an attempt was made to reach the Labrador coast by following Arnaud's route

3 "This is arid and sandy soil; we are discovering the truth of what our Indian guides told us—that once we had arrived here, we would have left behind the country of the mosquitoes and such, who cannot live here. This is the only virtue of these deserts: not to be able to feed these small beasts, [who are] very inconvenient for people."

4 Between 1632 and 1673, the annual reports of the Jesuit missionaries in New France were compiled and published as *Relations des Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France* (The Jesuit Relations).

5 Fletcher misquotes Virgil. The phrase "*haud passibus æquis*" is taken from Virgil's *Aeneid*, as Aeneas and his son Iulus leave Troy. The phrase means "with unequal steps." It became an idiom to mean "two men who pursue the same object, but with powers of attainment altogether different" (MacDonnel 1822, 124).

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up the River Moisie.[6] The projector was a noted tourist and writer of travels. The expedition was an entire failure. The dread of starvation lay like a lion in the path: and the whole party, though backed with all the improvements of modern travel, turned back in alarm, before even reaching the height of land.

Two centuries have passed away since these ancient worthies lived and travelled and wrote. From lapse of time and the mutable fortunes of the colony, their discoveries have for the most part gradually faded into oblivion. It must be borne in mind that the French king had reserved the Saguenay Territory as part of the domain; its fishing and hunting grounds being at that time considered the best in North America. In the royal leases, this territory extended from Ile-aux-Coudres to the River Moisy [*sic*], two leagues beyond the Bay of Seven Islands; and in depth inland, it included all the lakes and rivers which fall into the Lake St. John and the Saguenay, comprising the ports of Tadousac, Chicoutimi, Lake St. John, Nekouba, Mistassinoc, Papinachois, and Naskapis. The first lease dated as far back as 1658 and was granted to Sieur Demaure under an *arrêt* of the Superior Council of Quebec. The order of the State Council, passed in 1677—that this territory should be carefully explored, and laid down on a map—was only carried out in 1733. It was from this map that Charlevoix published his own chart eleven years later; and it needs only a cursory glance at this latter to convince oneself, as the late Mr. Andrew Stuart remarks, that the Saguenay was at that time better known than the interior of the country between Quebec and Montreal.[7]

When the Red Cross replaced the Lilies, the vast interior fell into the hands of other powerful and exclusive trading companies, and became a terra incognita, a land of hobgoblins and chimeras dire, where ingress was always discountenanced and often forbidden.[8] By degrees, the few traces of civilization disappeared; the voice of the missionary was heard at rare intervals; the quiet homestead, the cornfield and the garden, which the patient industry of the Jesuits had reclaimed

6 Fletcher refers here to Charles Arnaud (1826–1914), an Oblate missionary who worked closely with the Montagnais Indians (as they were then known).

7 Fletcher likely refers to Andrew Stuart and David Stuart's 1829 *Rapport des Commissaires pour explorer le Saguenay*. I am unable to identify the passage, although he does compare the fertility and liveability of the Saguenay to Montréal. He may be exaggerating based on the detailed geological commentary made by the Stuarts.

8 The Anglican Cross of Saint George—a metonym for the Church of England—displaced the three lilies of the Bourbon Flag, Fletcher's metonym for French Catholicism.

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from the wilderness, returned again to the dank vegetation of the forest. The dust gathered around their records, and their voices at length waxed faint and unreal as the utterances of a fairy tale. And thus the world in which they lived and moved and acted has become to us as a drama of the past. The lava and scoriae have hardened over it, as over the Ausonian cities of old;[9] and now that it has been exhumed, it still seems to remain apart and far-removed from our own sphere of activity, and we stand admiring and astonished, as at the recovery of a lost world. Who can verify the position of all the lakes and rivers and routes of travel, of which these memoirs make mention? Where was situated that golden land of which the Père Albanel writes—a land of patriarchal trees, of luxuriant meadows and broad plains of richest vegetation? Where lay the site of that great fair of nations, mentioned by Drueillet and Dablon, a counterpart apparently of those medieval fairs in Sarmatia, where the tribes of Europe and Asia met in peaceful intercourse for trade and barter? We cannot tell. We are powerless to restore the actuality of these wondrous stories. They resemble an old Etruscan inscription; the characters are there; we know the letters; we can pronounce the words; but the key to their solution is still wanting.

Nor can we regard this as a solitary instance of a large tract of country being for a lengthened period cut off from the rest of the world and again restored.[10] There are other lands whose existence has for a time faded into the background or been altogether ignored. The Canary Islands, the Insulae Fortunatae of the ancients, were explored by that Juba, king of Numidia, of whose voyages an exact account has been given by the elder Pliny.[11] For above a thousand years they seem to have remained unnoticed and unknown: their modern history commences with their accidental rediscovery by a French vessel shipwrecked on the coast in the year 1330. The fate of the old Norwegian colony in Greenland is not less singular. Established in the ninth century of our era, it grew in a short time to

9 Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabiae, Oplontis, and Boscoreale were all buried under ash from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE. "Ausonia" is the Greek name for southern Italy.

10 Of course, the locations were not isolated to Indigenous peoples, and the trope of the "vanishing Indian" should be recognized here.

11 Juba's writings were widely recognized and referred to several times by Pliny the Elder in *Natural History*. Juba II was King of Numidia and Mauretania, which is the Latin name for the geographic area that spanned sections of the Mahgreb (North Africa), including present-day Algeria and Morocco. Ancient Mauretania should also not be conflated with modern state of Mauretania, which lies on the western edge of the Mahgreb.

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12 parishes, 190 villages, a bishop's see, and 2 convents, under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Drontheim.[12] From accidental causes the communication subsequently ceased, and the Norse settlement in Greenland became unknown to Europe for several centuries, until in 1557 it was rediscovered, and the Danes again established a connexion with the lost colony.[13] So also the interior of North Africa was much better known in the days of Leo Africanus than at present, and his work *De Totius Africae Descriptione*,[14] a minute account of the tribes and topography of the Sahara, remains to shew us how much we have lost and how much we have yet to recover.

But however defective our present knowledge of the interior of the Saguenay country, there has been for the last half century a constantly increasing curiosity as to the capabilities and physical conditions of that interesting region. In the year 1827, an Act passed the provincial parliament, entitled *An Act to appropriate a certain sum of money therein mentioned for exploring the tract of country to the North of the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence, commonly called the King's Posts, and the lands adjacent thereto*.[15] In pursuance of this Act, Commissioners were appointed, and drew up a scheme of survey. Three expeditions were organized. One party under Mr. [Joseph] Bouchette, ascended the River St. Maurice to the mouth of the River La Tuque, a distance of fifty leagues, ascended the latter river to its sources, and crossing over the head waters of the Batiscan entered into the waters in their neighbourhood, which empty themselves into Lake

12 This is an anachronism and German exonym of Trontheim, so Fletcher is relying on a German source here. In the late Middle Ages, the Archbishop of Trontheim would have been the Archbishop of Nidaros.

13 This aligns with the history of the Norse settlement of Greenland, but Fletcher's source is uncertain. He may be relying on the "Colonization of Greenland" section of Paul Henri Mallet's *Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc*, which was also translated into English and expanded by Thomas Percy as *Northern Antiquities* and expanded again by I. A. Blackwell in 1847.

14 Joannes Leo Africanus (1494–1554), was born al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Fasi. He converted to Christianity and changed his name to Johannes Leo de Medicis, although he remains better known as Leo Africanus. Africanus dictated the text of *Description of Africa* to Giovanni Batista Ramusio in Italian, who published it in 1550 under the title *Della descrittione dell'Africa et delle cose notabili che ivi sono*. It was translated into Latin in 1556 under the title Fletcher cites. The first English translation, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, was published in 1600.

15 Fletcher appears to have the date incorrect. The bill received a second reading in the Québec Legislature on 13 March 1826.

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St. John, at a point at about four leagues above the Post of Metabetchuan, the old Jesuit establishment upon that Lake. Mr. Proulx, with a second party, was instructed to explore the lands lying upon the Ha-Ha Bay and between it and Chicoutimi, and having completed this survey he was directed to cross the River Saguenay at Chicoutimi, and penetrate into the interior, on the opposite side, by the River des Terres Rompues. A third party was placed under the direction of Mr. Hamel, who explored the peninsula between the outlet of Lake St. John, on the one side, and the River Chicoutimi on the other. The survey of the Lake itself and its tributary streams was divided among them. The value of these Reports is greatly enhanced by the scientific researches of Capt. Baddeley of the Royal Engineers, who paid special attention to the geology of the exploration. In their concluding Report the commissioners observe that there appears to be sufficient evidence "to demonstrate that this tract of territory could afford habitation and subsistence to a large population, and that there is a vast extent of cultivable land about Lake St. John, the Saguenay, and the waters connecting them, upon which it would be desirable to effect settlements." They go on then to remark that "the climate of Chicoutimi and lower down the Saguenay seems to be much like that at Quebec, whilst it would appear that about Lake St. John, the climate is as mild as that of Montreal, perhaps milder."[16]

Perhaps the exceptional character of the climate of Lake St. John is best shewn by the fact of its being a wheat-growing district. On the north shore of the St. Lawrence no wheat will thrive east of Cape Tourment. It is known that this cereal is of wide climatological range but is singularly affected by slight differences of heat and humidity. In England, whenever the mean temperature of July and August is below 60° of Fahrenheit, the crop is deficient. On this continent, according to the Canada Year Book, it seems to require for at least two months a mean of 65°.

But the great drawback to this fine tract of land has hitherto been its seclusion, its remoteness, its want of facile communication with the more ancient settlements. The great problem to be resolved, and towards which every effort should be directed, is to give it an outlet for its produce, and a greater accessibility from the older lines of travel. It was therefore with feelings of no ordinary satisfaction that while engaged in 1863, in the inspection of certain Crown Land surveys in the neighbourhood of Bagotsville, I received instructions from the Department to traverse on my return the interior country lying between Ha-Ha

16 Quoting Christie (1850, 209).

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Bay and St. Urbain, including also a digression to the Grand Ha-Ha Lake. The season was propitious. The weather was magnificent. I was fortunate too in securing the assistance of an experienced guide, Desiré Côté of St. Alphonse, who procured for me a good horse, sure-footed as a mule, and possessed of all the necessary qualifications for going over a rough and stony country.

Starting, therefore, on the 23rd July, I arrived before evening at Louis Fournier's camp on the Lac a la Belle Truite, a distance of not more than seven leagues.[17] The ground here, after the first steep rise near the bay, was tolerably level and presented few features of interest; the timber being small and of second growth; spruce prevailing, associated with sapin, yellow pine, white birch and cedar. We killed several wild pigeons with a horse-pistol, a most useful implement, by the way, in an excursion of this kind, when whatever game you stumble on is generally close at hand, and the range consequently short. The arm we used was of an ancient pattern; had a barrel of nearly eighteen inches in length; and carried about half an ounce of powder with a large handful of shot. The explosion was alarmingly fine, but I preferred allowing the guide to use it. Fournier's camp, as it is called, is simply a species of log cabin, having under the same roof accommodation for travellers, and stabling for horses; so that the horse and his rider sleep within hearing of each other, and "thin partitions do their bounds divide."[18] I kept in the open air as much as possible, and in the evening went out with a son of my host, on the lake. I threw four flies at a cast, and every fly was almost instantaneously taken. The lake is evidently swarming with trout, and of remarkably fine quality, the flesh reddish or salmon-coloured and delicious in flavour. After smoking a pipe with my host in front of his humble dwelling, and watching the slowly moving constellations, the "*taciturna noctis signa*," till far into the night, I wrapped my blanket about me with much internal satisfaction, and so drifted gently into obliviousness.[19] The next two days were employed in diverging due west to the River Ha-Ha, and thence to the Grand Lake. On the morning of the 24th, leaving our horses at Fournier's, we commenced to scale the high land to the westward, the ground rising throughout, till we struck the river; found poor stony soil in general, yellow sandy loam, with cypress, pine, white birch and epinette; rocky hills of limited extent with small swamps between.

17 The identity of Fletcher's Lac à la Belle Truite is unclear.

18 John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, part I, line 163.

19 Fletcher quotes from Horace, *Odes*, Book II, poem 8: *et toto taciturna noctis signa*, "and all night's silent constellations."

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Crossing the river, and scaling it upwards along the left bank, we found the same timber mixed with poplar swampy hollows and tangled vegetation. Rain threatening, we camped early, covering the camp with spruce and birch bark. Next morning, the rain having ceased, we started for the discharge of the Grand Lake, and about 7 a.m. struck the Ha-Ha River at the Great Rapid, not far from the outlet. Having crossed the river with some difficulty at the head of the rapid, we stood at length, at 8 1/2 a.m., on the shore of the Grand Lake. The view was inexpressibly fine. Looking southwards and lengthwise along this magnificent sheet of water, the mountains of the County of Charlevoix were distinctly visible. All around was rolling and mountainous land. One small island, green and leafy with foliage, lay like a gem on the lake's mirror-like surface. Not a breath of wind was stirring; nor was there a sound to be heard save the screaming of a solitary loon, or *huard*, which flew over our heads and seemed to increase the lonely impressiveness of the scene. The upper end of the lake was beyond our view, but as its shores faded in the distance, we could see here and there several bold promontories projecting into the water, with the wild fowl swooping round their pine-covered summits. There we halted for an hour; made a fire, and having recruited our exhausted energies, started for Fournier's in a northeast direction. The ground was most uneven and fatiguing to traverse; a succession of parallel ridges and hollows: the longitudinal axis of these appearing to bear nearly east and west: these rocky hills, with their scant vegetation and regular swell, seemed almost to resemble the billows of a great sea which the rod of some resistless power had touched and stiffened in a moment into stone. On the highest of one of these hills, the absence of trees permitted us to see all round for many miles. The elevation must have been very great. The country seemed spread out like a map beneath us. The lakes in the vicinity, with the streams and their coupes or valleys were easy to be identified. We reached the lower end of Belle Truite Lake before dark, and blowing the conch-shell placed there, the signal was heard at Fournier's, though over a mile distant, and a canoe came to fetch us across. The heat all day was terrific, with frequent thunder showers. On the 27th, Monday, we resumed our journey along the road track towards St. Urbain.

Our course lay nearly due south. On approaching the smaller Lake Ha-Ha, at about six miles from Fournier's, an enormous mountain rose on our right, between the Lake and the road. As we advanced, it seemed to grow upon us, till at length it towered up some two thousand feet above our heads, presenting to us a bare, flat, wall-like, almost perpendicular face, with narrow terraces covered with birch and pine, crossing it in dark stripes from side to side. The pines at its

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base stood from sixty to a hundred feet high; at its summit they were hardly to be distinguished. We involuntarily halted for a moment. We seemed to be passing the portals of the habitable world. That great mass of granite appeared no unworthy limit to divide the known from the unknown. Hitherto our way had lain in great part among men and their habitations; we were now to lose these for a time. In the sublime *Lusiad* of Camoens, the navigator who first doubled the southern Cape of Africa is feigned to be met by an awful shape, the genius of the undiscovered ocean, who bars his passage and inquires his purpose.[20] In the intense loneliness of the place, I half fancied the possibility of a like incident, and almost expected that the "*genius loci*," the tutelary guardian of the wilderness beyond, would startle us with a similar apparition.

The track which we now entered on was one which seemed to have been traced through the mountainous country with admirable dexterity. I believe that the late Mr. J. Bte. Duberger, of St. Paul's Bay, was one of the first to explore it. Several times it seemed to me, engulfed as we were among mountains, a most difficult problem to say how we were to get out; yet, thanks to our unfailing clue, the thread-like road-track, we always *did* emerge; some small opening appeared, widened, gave us egress, and again the hills closed in on every side as before. I think it is that ancient worthy Seneca, who, in his Treatise *de Constantia Sapientis*, speaking of the arduous paths by which the true philosopher has to ascend, says that even these are not so difficult as they appear at a distance, and compares them to those mountain ranges which, as seen from afar, when the eye is deceived by their remoteness, appear connected and impassable; but to those who approach them, they open out by degrees and shew an easy and accessible passage.[21] It would be hard to find a more apt illustration of the text than this part of our route.

Yet it was not all bare mountain-land. At about nine leagues from Grand Bay there was a charming patch of prairie or meadowland. The long grass waved pleasantly, and thousands of small wildflowers blossomed in the shade; a mile farther on, we stumbled on rather a startling memento, the skeleton of a horse; perhaps fatigue, or a broken leg had brought the poor brute to an untimely end. My own steed was all that could be desired; walking leisurely and with

20 Fletcher refers to canto I of the Portuguese epic poem *Os Lusiadas* (1572), by the highly esteemed poet Luís de Camões (1525–1580).

21 The reference is to section I of *De Constantia Sapientis* (*On the Firmness of the Wise*), composed roughly in the middle of the first century CE.

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wonderful sagacity, never stumbling, and feeling with extended forefoot every inch of doubtful or dangerous road. The guide marched stoutly on before, as if blessed with limbs of iron and muscles of steel, never tiring and never at a loss. Now and then our patience was somewhat tried, as in *Mollières,* or soft places—*Vasières* or mud-holes, where, spite of everything, the horse *would* go in, almost to his girths—or in spots encumbered by roots of trees, where a dislocated joint seemed almost inevitable. But these were exceptions, and in the main this part of the journey was an intoxication of delight, which those will understand who have been on horseback in a hilly country when the sun shines and the breeze blows, and all seems fresh and unfaded as in the very morning of creation. But as the hours wore on, the light breeze fell by degrees. The carpet of green grass disappeared. We were entering on a stony hollow. The bare granite hills closed in, as a wall, to right and left; the air was heavy and motionless; the heat became oppressive. A few crickets chirped; but even these seemed to give in at last, and the silence remained unbroken. The rocks glowed with the intense sunshine, and the dwarfed vegetation gave no promise of a shade; in so sultry an atmosphere, everything seemed to simmer and quiver around. The relief was intense, when at length the pass widened, a small lake appeared on our right, and the hills about us wore a less desolate aspect. About half a league past this small sheet of water—which the guide called the Little Ha-Ha Lake—we came opposite to one of the most interesting objects of the whole route—a huge eminence known as the Half-way Mountain, standing to the west of our track and at some six furlongs distance.[22] Its appearance was most striking; pre-eminent and alone in its altitude of some three thousand feet, and nearly pyramidal in figure, a wedge of red syenite, a landmark such as a Titan might have planted, it shut out the afternoon sun with its grand proportions.[23]

For long it remained by us on our right, a sublime and awful presence, and we, toiling laboriously round its base, seemed dwarfed to absolute nothingness before the calm serenity of this majestic vision. Yet it passed at length; receded; and was left behind. Another stony pass awaited us, and this overcome, we entered on a *brulê*, or grove of burnt timber, the very picture of gloomy desolation. A more melancholy or funereal scene than these black and charred stumps,

22 Petit Lac Ha! Ha! is the southern arm of Lac Ha! Ha!, and today's Route 381 crosses where the two arms meet. "Half-way Mountain" is most likely Mont des Graines Rouges, located in Charlevoix county, nearly two hundred kilometres northeast from Québec City.

23 Syenite is a relatively uncommon type of igneous rock, similar to granite.

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with the tall weeds between, nodding like plumes on a bier, can scarcely be imagined. Hastening through it we halted by a small stream, cooked our game, threw ourselves on the sward, and rested for an hour. Rising then with recruited strength after our repast, we came almost immediately on a singular pavement, or paved way of circular flattened stones, thoroughly water-worn and smooth, but without a particle of earth about them. I have seen a similar mass of stone on the Rigaud mountain, between the Ottawa and St. Lawrence. There it covers several acres, and is called the "place à guéret," or ploughed field, from its quasi-furrowed appearance. The travelling here was most irksome and not a little dangerous. Passing onward we crossed a small stream falling into the Malbay River [*sic*], and shortly afterwards found ourselves at the foot of Côte à la Cruche.[24] This Côte is a long rising slope of about three miles, lasting to the valley of the Malbay River [*sic*]. The rise seems interminable. Midway on it is another ridge of round stones, entirely bare of earth, similar to that already noted.

By the time the Malbay River was reached, the sun was near its setting, and the shadows of the gloaming time already lay on the valleys and low grounds. We crossed the river with some difficulty on a species of raft, with the aid of a rope. The log hut which used to stand here, and which would have been an excellent resting place, had unfortunately been destroyed by fire some time previously, together with a lot of red spruce logs intended for a bridge. There was no course left us, therefore, but to continue our route by night and push onward to Paul Duchesne's cabane, at Lac à la Galette, the next stopping place.[25] The ground we now traversed seemed much more level than on the north of the river. The valleys were more spacious, and the hills were removed to a greater distance. The soil also was much less stony. A thick unctuous clay appeared in many places to overlie a substratum of sand. The timber was in general larger, and the vegetation more abundant. This improved condition continued, with few exceptions, for the next two hours of travel; and I suppose our rate of going scarcely exceeded three miles an hour. We floundered through some most profound mud-holes, and I began to feel somewhat benumbed and stiff from being so long in the saddle, but these minor inconveniences were scarcely thought of in the novelty and strangeness of the scene. The moon was near the full; the sky almost cloudless; the night seemed bright as day. I was alone, for the guide was out of sight, and

24 The Rivière Malbaie loops over the west, north, and east of Lac de la Galette.

25 Despite Fletcher using "Lac à la Galette," this is Lac de la Galette. Route 381 runs past the lake today.

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letting the bridle fall carelessly from my hand, I willingly surrendered myself to the weird influences of the hour, with all the luxurious dreaminess inspired by the intense stillness of the interminable forest; and watched as in a reverie the fantastic shapes assumed by the crags and branches, and all the grotesque appearances that glimmered, here and there, in the hazy splendour of a light that seemed to reveal so much and yet left so much to the imagination. I thought of the night so solemnly pictured in the opening of the Ephigenia in Aulis, of Faust and his midnight journey through the air to the witches' festival on the Brocken, and of those fine lines of poor Nat Lee, the madman:

> With a heart of furious fancies
> Whereof I am commander;
> With a horse of air, and a spear of fire,
> To the wilderness I wander.
> With a knight of ghosts and shadows
> I summoned am to journey,
> Ten leagues beyond the wide-world's end;
> Methinks it is no journey![26]

But all this was soon over. About a league before getting to Lac à la Galette, the travelling is again very rough and uneven, and dreaming is here out of the question, unless at the hazard of a fall. We arrived at Paul's about midnight, were most kindly received, and retired to rest in a room which seemed an odd compromise between civilisation and barbarism; the walls being neatly papered, and the beds being of spruce boughs.

Next morning, while preparing for a start, our worthy host entertained us with some account of himself and his adventures. I believe he still lives; and, possibly, to many in Quebec his name is not unfamiliar. Paul, I found, was a notable hunter, and acquainted with many of our leading sporting characters. He spoke in high terms of a certain well-known Quebecker, resident in the vicinity of Pointe à Piseault, whom he considered an unfailing shot at deer within

26 These are three references Fletcher alludes to: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Iphigenia in Tauris* (1779, 1786 in verse form) is a reworking of Euripides's *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (c. 412 BCE); Goethe's *Faust* (1808); and the high Brocken mountain peak that is associated with magic, alludes to the famous anonymous seventeenth century poem, "Tom O'Bedlam."

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120 yards: he once saw him bring down five cariboux in immediate succession with a revolver. "Enfin," he contended, with emphasis, "c'est mon maître."[27] On the other hand he anathematised with intense disgust the conduct of a certain party of novices, who, though armed to the teeth, they turned and ran off when a cross old she-bear approached, leaving him alone to try conclusions, with only a knife and tomahawk. However, Paul, nothing daunted, prepared for the fray, and would most probably have made a good fight of it, but the bear, after a moment's pause, faced about and went off. He pointed out to me a ridge to the west, where the cariboux were generally to be found, the original preferring the "bois vert [green wood]"—and another to the east which was "fameux pour les ours [famous for bears]," as if each animal had its peculiar habitat. His wife was an Indian half-breed, and his children had all of them a decided Tartar physiognomy. He, himself, was a well-knit, light-limbed man, of middle height, and remarkably active and intelligent.

On the morning of the 28th, the fifth day after leaving Grand Bay, we prepared for our last day's travel, being now within six leagues of St. Urbain. When about a league from Lac à la Galette, the guide pointed out, to the right, the valley containing the headwaters of the River Ste. Anne, which falls into the St. Lawrence a few miles below Château Richer. The ground all round us was in general level, and the plains wide and spacious. Another league brought us to the celebrated Pass De Monts, a mass of lofty and fantastically shaped mountains, having the axis of their strike nearly east and west. The loftiest of these, on the west side of the road, and almost overhanging it, attains an altitude of about 2,500 feet. It is quite bald on the summit, and perpendicular on one face. These huge masses of rock are the more imposing from their rising abruptly from an almost level plain. They are the great natural gates which close the interior on this side, corresponding with those already described at its northern entrance, near the great Ha-Ha Lake. With the Pass De Monts, the *terra incognita* may be said to terminate. Small settlements, scattered at first, and gradually more frequent, began to shew themselves. We could see the humble huts of the husbandmen, and the children playing in the shade, while, here and there, some sun-browned labourer stood in the doorway, shading his eyes with his hand, and gazing inquisitively in our direction. At length, we passed the church of

27 The French literally means, "In the end, this is my master"; however, a more contextual translation would be, "He's my hero!"

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St. Urbain, and crossed the hospitable threshold of Moïse Côté, thus agreeably terminating what to me had been an excursion of more than ordinary interest.[28]

Let me remark, before concluding, that I cannot but think it most important, in the interests of colonization, that this line of road, from St. Urbain to Ha-Ha Bay, should be finally completed for travel. I am aware that since the date of my journey, much has been done. It appears to me that the finest part of the Saguenay country, for agricultural purposes is that great peninsula in the neighbourhood of Lake St. John, extending eastward to the River Chicoutimi. This tract has the Kenogami Road in the interior; it has also the Sydenham Road, to connect it with Ha-Ha Bay, a remarkably good line of road, level and well made. I have been over it in a *calêche*,[29] from end to end, some eleven or twelve miles, and found it as easy travelling as anywhere in the vicinity of Quebec; and the same may be said of the road from Chicoutimi westward, over which I have travelled in a summer vehicle, into the Township of Jonquiere. I look on the Ha-Ha Bay, therefore, as being the natural terminus or seaport of the peninsula, a bay whose marine capabilities seem to be but imperfectly appreciated. The Hon. De Sales Laterrière, in a published letter of 1827, speaks of it as being "the great mart hereafter on the Saguenay, and natural port for vessels arriving from beyond the sea."[30] And in the same spirit, the deputy surveyor general, who had charge of the expedition in 1827, remarks in his journal: "The Bay des Has evidently appears to have been formed by nature as the principal seat of commerce and trade of all this portion of country; 1st, For the extensive tract of level land that lies about it, extending to Lake Tsiamogomi and Chicoutimi; 2dly, For the harbour it affords for the largest vessels of the line, which can sail directly into the Bay with nearly the same wind that they ascended the Saguenay, and anchor in the second Bay which it appears to form in manner of a basin, which I presume would be a fit site for a mart of trade; and 3dly, The facility that is afforded of opening a road to Chicoutimi" (which has now been done),"or direct to the head of Tsiamagomi—indeed the great ease with which

28 Fletcher may mean La Fabrique St-Urbain here. There are a number of people named Moïse Côté from Saint-Urbain, and this is perhaps Moïse Côté (1816–1879).

29 A small carriage. Also known in English as a barouche, it is a four-wheeled carriage with a collapsible top that was popular in the nineteenth century. In most models, the driver sat on a box seat located at the front, while passengers sat in double seats inside.

30 Pierre-Jean de Sales Laterrière (1789–1834), mostly likely translated from the 1827 third volume of his *Nouveaux journaux de voyage*.

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a water communication could be effected between it and that lake to remove the intricate and circuitous route of the Chicoutimi River, the difference of level not exceeding 250 feet, in a distance of 4½ to 5 leagues through the level tract that lies between these places. It is protected by Cap à l'Est, and the prominent hills that form its entrance."[31] So also Mr. Surveyor Proulx, in his Report of the same date, says, "the Bay is about 11 miles wide at its mouth, and running 2 miles inland would afford a complete shelter for a great number of vessels of any size. The anchorage is very good and varies in depth from fifteen to thirty-five fathoms. This bay forms a harbour wherein vessels would be sheltered from all winds." This statement is confirmed as to the depth of water by the recent admiralty chart of Captain Bayfield, which also shews how admirably the inner bay is protected by the surrounding highlands. Having therefore these data: a fine tract of country with a mild climate at Lake St. John, and an excellent road thence to Ha-Ha Bay, formed by nature to be the great seaport, it is obvious that the grand desideratum is a line of road which should at all seasons, in winter as well as in summer, connect the Bay with the older settlements on the St. Lawrence. I believe that the line to St. Urbain fulfils these conditions.

Some years have elapsed since the date of this service, but to me it will always remain present as one of many similar reminiscences. Here as elsewhere I found cheerfulness and contentedness hallowing and ennobling a life of privation and toil. Looking on one of these men of the wilderness, who would not say, with Carlyle, "I honour the toil-worn craftsman who laboriously conquers the earth and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard hand, crooked, coarse, wherein, notwithstanding, lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the sceptre of this planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with

31 The deputy surveyor general from whom Fletcher quotes and who is identified earlier as "Mr. Bouchette" is evidently Joseph Bouchette Jr. (1800–1881), the son of the more famous Joseph Bouchette (1774–1841), who served as surveyor general from 1804 until his death in 1841. In *The British Dominions in North America* (1832), Bouchette (Sr.) discusses this expedition, in a section headed: "Interior of the Country lying between the Saguenay and the St. Maurice, as taken from the Report of Joseph Bouchette, Jun. Esq., Deputy Surveyor-General of the Province" (281). Bouchette goes on to quote the same passage that Fletcher does here, although the wording of the two quotations varies somewhat. Arguably, the most striking difference concerns "Lake Tsiamogomi" (or "Tsiamagomi"), a name that appears in Bouchette as "Lake Kinuagomi" (290). (About these names, see note 1 to Fletcher's poem "Legend of the Isiamagomi" [122]). Note also that, while this expedition was indeed organized in 1827, it probably took place in 1828: Bouchette refers to "the exploring operations of 1828" (281).

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its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a man living manlike. Oh, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee! Hardly entreated brother! For us was thy back so bent; for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed; thou wert our conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred."[32] Assuredly, here, if any where, is to be found the very bone and sinew of our strength. And it was not without regret that I exchanged the free, fresh air of the forest, and the frank hospitality of its inhabitants, for the worn-out platitudes and hollow unrealities of a life in towns. Not without regret did I resign a communion with all that is grand and beautiful in nature for the questionable advantages of civic refinement. There is much to be learned from a life in the backwoods. Fortitude, patience, perseverance; these, the great lessons of life, are best learned there. It were well if our young men would devote themselves more to the cultivation of the soil. It seems sad to see so many wasting the great gift of time in idle frivolities. Let them go out and subdue the wilderness and make it their own. It was thus in old time that the fathers of Rome, the masters of the world, strengthened body and soul by labours in the field, and the same hands that handled the mattock or the spade could wield on occasion the sword of the general or the rod of the dictator. Of a truth among these there was a manliness, a simplicity, a depth of character, owing in great part, to their respect and attachment for agricultural pursuits. Some of the noblest families derived their surnames from cultivating particular kinds of grain, as the Fabii, the Pisones, the Lentuli, the Cicerones, and others.[33] To be a good husbandman was accounted the highest praise. *Bonus colonus* or *agricola* was equivalent to *vir bonus*, and whoever neglected the cultivation of his ground was liable to the rebuke of the censors.[34] The elder Cato, Cincinnatus, Curius Destatus, Fabricius, Regulus, these were the true types of the ancient Roman, and, when these failed, the state crumbled in ruin.[35] Let us profit by the example.

32 Fletcher quotes from chapter 4 of *Sartor Resartus* (Carlyle 2008, 172), a satirical novel in the form of a philosophical treatise written in 1831 by Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881).

33 As notes, all these Roman family names derive from names for grains.

34 The Latin *bonus colonus* means "good settler," and *agricola* is "farmer," while *vir bonus* means "good man."

35 Cato the Elder (234–149 BCE), Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus (519–430 BCE), Manius Curius Dentatus (–270 BCE), Gaius Fabricius Luscinus (third century BCE), and Marcus Atilius Regulus (c. 307–250) were Romans who were all known for their incorruptibility.

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The future of the country is in the hands of its youth. May they be faithful to the trust! And to them and to all of us what now remains of it to stand shoulder to shoulder, forgetting all minor differences, and having but one thought—the good of the commonweal. We, moreover, have a faith which the old Roman was not permitted to enjoy—a faith which, I believe, weaves and burns throughout the length and breadth of the land. It was a noble and poetic thought which, years ago, raised a cross on the summit of the Beloeil mountain.[36] I would it were restored. I have seen it flash in the sun at a distance of many leagues; a sublime emblem, a significant confession of a united Christian people. Taking our stand here, untiring in our labours, unfaltering in our aspirations, let us hope that a peculiar blessing will rest on this fair land, and that our children, or our children's children, may see it self-reliant, self-sustained, self-protecting—a Nation among Nations. *Esto perpetua*.[37]

36 The cross was erected in 1841 atop Mont Saint-Hilaire, the two names of the mountain being disputed. The cross was destroyed in 1846 and rebuilt in 1871, though it was destroyed again in 1876.

37 Latin: "Let it be perpetual" or "For all time."

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Notes of a Voyage to St. Augustine, Labrador

1882

Read before the Geographical Society, 14 March 1881

Some years are past since I visited St. Augustine, on the coast of Labrador. I would recall for a few moments the incidents of this voyage, while their memory is yet clear and unfaded. I am desirous of giving a brief coherence to these fleeting reminiscences before they pass away and perish amid the confused and indistinguishable shapes and shadows of the past.

It was during the summer of 1875 that I was invited to form one of a party about to explore for minerals in the Bay of St. Augustine and at certain points along the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The very name of Labrador possessed a strong and indefinable power of attraction. A land of mist and storms, of darkness and winter, and shipwreck; the "helluland" of the old Northern Saga; the land where Leif Eirekson [*sic*], called by Humboldt, "the discoverer of America," first set foot more than eight centuries ago; the first spot in the Western Hemisphere to receive the visit of a European voyager. I accepted the proposal without hesitation.

On Thursday, the 17th of June, an hour before sunset, the weather being clear and fine, with a light northwesterly breeze, our schooner, the *Philomène*, Zephirin Gagnon, master, cast loose from her moorings at Renaud's wharf, and floated slowly out into the stream, at the mouth of the River St. Charles. Comparatively few travellers have left Quebec by water on this its northern side. The immense sweep of buildings from the Laval grounds westward to the old city wall, and thence onward through the extensive suburbs, the densely crowded

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houses, filling the entire slope of the land from the ridge downwards, the bright metallic roofs reflecting the last rays of the setting sun, all rose up before us as some grand amphitheatral show, in which the huge bulk of the Laval University above, the Custom House below, and the St. John's Church far to the right, stood predominantly conspicuous.

With a fair wind, yet scarcely strong enough to raise more than a ripple on the water, we floated silently out into the broad expanse, passing the Bay of Beauport, the south point of Orleans, the pleasant shore of Beauport and, half veiled in the darkness of night, the massive promontory of St. Joachim.

Of the early part of our voyage, passing over well-known ground, I shall say but little. Touching at Baie St. Paul on the following morning, we had to walk over nearly two miles of sand before reaching the village, it being then low water. Notable here, are the numerous stone tenements, whose walls are rent and fractured by earthquakes. Baie St. Paul has suffered much from this cause,[1] and it has been remarked that whenever slight shocks of earthquake have occurred elsewhere, they have been felt here with tenfold severity. In the damp glades behind the village I was struck with the number of low equiseta or horse-tail plants, with their grooved stems and bamboo-like aspect. I looked with interest on these degenerate descendants of those tall trees that in the coal age attained a height of thirty or forty feet.[2] Leaving there on Saturday, we anchored with a head wind and mid a storm of rain and hail, at Pointe aux Oies.[3] On Sunday, the 20th, we set sail with a northeast wind, which shifted at 10 a.m. to the south-west, and we dashed on at a rapid pace, with the sails wing-and-wing. A fine landscape extended to the north, with patches of snow, however, still visible on the mountains. At 4:30 we passed the mouth of the Saguenay, and after a day made up of breezy sunshine and ever-changing scenery, the evening closed with a falling wind and indications of fog.

In the silence of that summer midnight we drifted through those broad portals, old as creation itself, which at the Point de Monts, open as it were, on

1 The 1860 and 1870 earthquakes caused significant damage to Baie St. Paul. The riviere de Gouffre that runs through the city also flows from Saint-Urbain described in "Notes of a Journey Through the Interior of the Saguenay Country."

2 The familiar *Equisetum* plant is the only surviving plant in its genus, and its precursor Calamites could grow to 100 feet, as preserved in fossils.

3 North of Québec City on the southern bank of the Saint Lawrence River, near to Montmagny.

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the Gulf of St. Lawrence.[4] Here the river, expanding to more than double its width, loses its name, and becomes an arm or estuary of the sea. In the morning we were wrapt in mist. At 5 p.m. we first caught a glimpse of land—the Seven Islands to the left. Shoals of porpoises were rolling around us, and three whales were blowing in the distance. We seemed to have all at once emerged from a land-bound river and to have come, unawares, on the great deep itself, shoreless and illimitable. All appeared vast and spacious. The land visible seemed in the boundless plain of waters, as mere points on the horizon. At 6 p.m., when opposite La Boule Island, a squall struck the schooner from the northwest.[5] I was lying in my berth at the time, and found myself, to my surprise, suddenly deposited on the floor, while the books on the shelf above me fell rattling by my side. For a few moments all was confusion, uproar, and trampling of feet. The schooner was nearly on her beam ends. The jib was split from top to bottom. Both the large sails were let down with a run, and for some time the little craft, having righted, lay under bare poles, pitching and rolling in the boiling surge. It was soon over. At about dark, the repairs being made, we again hoisted sail, and started with a southwest wind. On the following day, we basked in a dead calm of hazy sunshine, off the Maniton [*sic*], watching the seals and ducks as they floated past. On our way we met a school of harp seals, swimming in regular order arranged in the form of a hollow square. A grampus[6] showed himself: several fishing boats appeared. The Perrequet Islands, the scene of so many shipwrecks, were covered with wild fowl.[7] At noon we were anchored at Mingan.[8] We lost no time in visiting the post, and its surroundings, and admired the magnificent fox skins in the store, some of them silver-grey and of great value, worth from $60 to $80 each. The next day brought us to Esquimault Point,

4 The opening of the St. Lawrence River into the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. Both side are rocky, and the north shore has a lighthouse at the Pointe des Monts built in 1829 and brought into operation in 1830.

5 Île Grosse Boule and Île La Petite Boule form part of the Sept-Îles Archipelago, Québec. Fletcher does not specify which of these islands they passed but considering that the Seven Islands lay to their left, it is likely Île Grosse Boule, which is the southernmost of the two islands.

6 This may refer to any of the species of dolphins or toothed whales, such as the orca, that inhabit the North Atlantic.

7 Île aux Perroquets is now famous for its lighthouse, which began operating in 1888. The other island is likely Greenly Island. Both are now bird sanctuaries.

8 Mingan is on the North bank of the Saint Lawrence River, North of Anticosti Island.

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which we reached shortly after noon. We found here a large village containing about a thousand souls, several two-story houses, the streets sandy and dreadfully fatiguing to get through. We visited Mr. LeGros, one of the chief commercants, at whose residence we found books, music, and all the etceteras of civilization. Esquimault Point may be regarded as the last considerable outpost of civilized life on the North Shore. Being detained here a few days, we visited the island opposite, Ile du Havre, made up of limestones and sand stones of the Potsdam period. The quantity of living whelks on its shores is remarkable. We found a small primrose, the *Primula farinosa* or bird's-eye primrose; also, a handsome shrub with pinkish compound flower, the *Rhodora canadensis*,[9] very abundant. In rear of the village the Ledum, or Labrador Tea,[10] is every where. In the afternoon of the third day, 26 June, a general discharge of musketry and hoisting of flags announced the arrival, from the east, of Bishop Langevin,[11] on his episcopal tour. The whole village seemed astir; and the Acadians, who compose the greater part of the population, fell on their knees in the highways whenever the bishop passed: a people evidently of sincere and simple piety, but not poetic in aspect—tall, gaunt, and ungainly, with long striped dresses of a peculiar and patriarchal type. The earliest of these Acadians arrived here in 1857, under the guidance of Ferman Boudreault, from the Magdalen Islands.[12] They now number sixty families and have twelve schooners for fishing. Their language has a foreign sound: and some of the words are peculiar. An ox is called *atlage*, and a fence, *bouchure*. On Tuesday, the 29th June, we left the Point, and at night were off Natashquan, the next largest Acadian colony, having forty families, with three fishing schooners. Off Cape Whittle we saw, next day, two enormous icebergs stranded on the shore, one shaped like a tent, the other tri-cuspid. We passed Little Mecatina Island at 4 p.m., and shortly afterwards came to Bull Head Harbour, a sort of sheltered creek between two islands.[13] Here we anchored

9 In the nineteenth century, taxonomists placed this species in its own genus, Rhodora. However, modern taxonomy includes it in the genus Rhodedendron, and its official name is *Rhododendron canadense*.

10 Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*) is a plant in the heath family.

11 Jean Langevin (1821–1892).

12 The Magdalen Islands are closer to Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton Island than to Québec but are an important home to Acadians.

13 Ile du Petit Mecatina is on the north shore of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. The ship is staying with the coastline before nearing the northern tip of Newfoundland.

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and visited Mr. Manger to obtain information. On the other side of the Island (St. Anthony's) we saw and inspected the metalliferous veins. The rock here is Lower Laurentian, the oldest metamorphic, quite distinguishable from the Upper Laurentian of St. Paul's Bay. The flora was represented by mulberries, raspberries, Labrador tea, mosses, and lichens. These flat beds of grey rock reminded one of the Helluland, or land of broad flat stones, of the old Saga of Leif Eirekson [*sic*]. No epithet could be more descriptive. The shoreline is wet with perpetual spray. On the worn edges of these islands the heavy surges of the sea beat unceasingly, with a dull and mournful sound. We seemed to hear the "*planctus illisae rupibus undae*" which Lucan speaks of, though the "*sylvarum sonus*" was certainly wanting.[14] As to the fauna of the vicinity, Mr. William Canty, our guide, told us that sharks had been seen off St. Augustine, and that a squid, or devil-fish, having arms twenty-two feet long and a body of fourteen feet, had seized hold of a boat in the offing.[15] Having completed our search, and looked at some old blastings, which contained nothing but a few specks of galena, we left on the 3rd July, sailing with a fresh breeze through an archipelago of islands. The sun shone, the water flashed and sparkled, seagulls flew around, a couple of icebergs loomed up in front, and on our left, close at hand, a fleet of small fishing boats, with red sails, flitted about like winged insects. This redness is produced by staining the sails with a decoction of birch bark or juniper, or sometimes with "goudron" or tar. Ere sunset we dropped anchor in Mutton Bay, a charming land-locked little harbour, with a score of schooners therein, chiefly from Newfoundland. The next day being Sunday, we attended divine service at the house of Mr. Hepburne, the Anglican missionary. He himself being absent at Natashquan, Mr. Ingram, an English fisherman, read the lessons, the two Misses Hepburne officiated at the harmonium, forty or fifty were present, fishermen and their families, all devout and attentive. A flag was hoisted at the flagstaff near the house—the red cross of St. George—to announce the hour

14 Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (39–65 CE) was a Roman poet and Fletcher appears to be incorrectly paraphrasing his *De Bello Civili* (The Civil War), commonly known as the *Pharsalia* (Lucan 1928, 354). The Latin phrases mean "The wailing waves dashed against the cliffs" and "sounds of the forest."

15 The common name, "devil-fish," refers to the giant devil ray, *Mobula mobular*. It seems more likely that a giant squid latched onto the vessel than a ray.

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of service.[16] During the afternoon we ascended a lofty hill in the vicinity, some five or six hundred feet high, from whence the opposite coast of Newfoundland was dimly visible. The hills that enclose the Bay are all *moutonnées* or rounded on top: their faces are seamed with deep crevices or fissures, the result probably of geologic crystallization. Two days afterwards, our exploration being completed, we resumed our route: the wind being fair, and several other schooners going down to St. Augustine's at the same time, whose course we wished to follow in taking the Sandy Island channel. At 11 a.m., we passed the south point of Grand Mecatina Island, and noticed the numerous boats along the shore, engaged in the search for the eggs of seafowl. At 11:40 we passed Baie Rouge with a chapel visible; then the Bay of LaTabatière; after which the rugged sierra edge of a continuous mountain range was visible to the north. Wild duck and other game flew past constantly: we kept up a running fire from the schooner, but not always with success. After a pleasant run we anchored to the south of Sandy Island at about 4 p.m. From fishermen coming with salmon, we secured two sixteen-pounders for half a dollar each. There is here quite an archipelago of islands, behind which to the northwest is the discharge of the St. Augustine River. In this delightful bay, with its innumerable islets, we remained many days, exploring the various metalliferous veins chiefly in Sandy Island and Isle à l'Eau Salée. We found the land in the larger islands dreadfully rough and broken—bare rock, or covered in many places with a matting of dwarf juniper which caught the foot like a mat of hooks or claws. Often deep holes were concealed by this matting, into which the unwary pedestrian was plunged unawares. On the high land the wind was generally blowing so strong that it was scarce possible to stand against it. I may note that during our stay the wind rose every day, with periodic regularity, fresh from the west at about 10 a.m. At 4 p.m. it was at its strongest; and at sunset it fell almost to a calm. The days were never warm, though the sun ranged high over our heads. A perpetual mist seemed to keep half his rays from reaching us.

On one occasion when returning to the schooner from our day's work, shortly after sunset, such is the number of these islands and their resemblance to each other, that we lost our way, though the night was clear and starlit. We

16 Although the 1801 Union Flag was the official flag of Canada at the time, the Red Ensign, the flag used on Canadian merchant ships, was used unofficially until it was formally adopted in 1892. However, Anglican churches, as part of the Church of England, were permitted to fly the St. George Cross.

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rowed hither and thither, from one channel to another, till a gun fired from the schooner relieved our perplexity. Often, during the quietude of those long summer afternoons, amid the profound solitude of these unpeopled wastes, where no church-bell has ever sounded, and no fane for Christian worship has arisen, have I climbed to the summit of some island rock, and there, resting beneath the shelter of a mossy stone, and looking far inland, I have lost myself in a reverie of conjectures as to the past of this strange mysterious land. These stony plains, geologically the oldest on the continent which stretch all round Hudson's Bay on the south, were above water when all besides was submerged. Who can tell the countless ages that have passed since they rose above the primal sea. They are older than all things, older than light itself: for light means life, and, if we except the enigmatic "eozoon,"[17] these rocks are azoic, are lifeless.[18] In the beginning was darkness on the earth, and then long ages of troubled gloom. The atmosphere, charged with vapours, refused to admit the sunlight. Upon this heated surface, and in this darkness made visible, organic life was not possible. None lived, save One alone; and it was at His command that the dry land appeared, and these, the first-born of creation, rose from the abyss. Since then the world has grown old, the vast panorama of living nature has been disclosed, successive generations of men have come and gone, as the autumn leaves that perish, deluge and earthquake have changed the face of the earth, the rains and storms of unnumbered winters have descended, all has changed and died and has been renewed, and these old rocks have lasted on through all, always the same, always unchanged—like the great sea itself, a type and mirror of their immutable Author.

This way passed Leif, the son of Eirek [*sic*], when he discovered America.[19] The *Codex Flateiensis*, a MS. of remarkable beauty, long preserved at Flatö in Iceland, and bearing its own date, 1387, includes under the Saga of Olaf Fryggvesson,

17 The *Eozoön canadense* is the oldest known fossil, described by John William Dawson in 1865 based on materials in southern Québec near Grenville-sur-la-Rouge. Fletcher is likely drawing on Dawson in his use of the term "coal age" as well. Despite his geological research, Dawson was a fervent opponent to Darwin's theory of evolution.

18 Azoic rock formed before life began on Earth.

19 Fletcher's sources are uncertain, but he may again be relying on Blackwell's expansion of Mallet's *Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc*. Here, as elsewhere in this narrative, Fletcher also relies on the Polish historian Joachim Lelewel's books, *Géographie du moyen âge* (1852) and *The Scandinavian Edda* (1807). Lelewel's work may also offer clues for identifying the sources of Fletcher's readings and translations from Polish and Icelandic.

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the Sagas of Eric the Red and of Leif his son, the discoverers of Greenland and of Vinland.[20] It is told how Leif set out from Greenland in the year 1000; how he came first to the land which Biorn Heriulfson in 986 sailing from Iceland, and seeking Greenland, had seen last; how he landed, found no grass but vast icy mountains in the interior, and between them and the shore a plain of flat stones, and the Saga says, "it appeared to them a country of no advantages:" from these flat stones (hella) he called it Helluland, a land of naked rocks. No description of the Labrador Coast could be more accurate than this given by Leif. The shores are, for the most part, flat, stony, and treeless. The mountains rise in snowy ridges behind. This was the land which Biorn had seen but would not stay to land at. How did Biorn describe it? He speaks of it as a land high and covered with glaciers; and coasting along it they saw it was an island: that is, they came to that large inlet of the sea, thirty miles in breadth, known as Esquimaux Bay, or Hamilton Inlet. Sailing thence with a southwest wind, in four days Biorn reached Heriulfsness, in Greenland, his father's abode. The high land which he saw was probably the Mealy Mountains or the lofty plateau to the southeast. The Mealy Range is first perceived about one hundred miles south of Esquimaux Bay, it runs nearly parallel to the coast, and is said by Cartwright and the Moravian missionaries to be always covered with snow. The memory of these adventurous Norsemen has not perished on the continent. To this day, as we are informed by Mr. Robertson, long a resident all the coast, the Esquimaux preserve a tradition that these Norsemen were a gigantic race, of great strength, very fierce, and delighting to kill people, and would not themselves be killed by either dart or arrow, which rebound from their breasts as from a rock. They suppose these giants still to exist, but very far north. After that notable pestilence, the black death, in the middle of the fourteenth century, their influence waned. The shadow of these mighty sons of Thor had scarce passed from the land when the Basques appeared—the Basques, the living embodiment of all that is daring or romantic in maritime discovery. Cabot in his first voyage found a Basque vessel on the coast of Newfoundland, and the Basques are always mentioned as having been met with in the early voyages of the time.[21] During the fifteenth and

20 The *Codex Flatöiensis*, an important medieval Icelandic manuscript, is also known as the Flatey Book or *Flateyjarbók* in Icelandic (Flat Island Book). The epic dates from late in the fourteenth century.

21 John Cabot (1450–1500) was an Italian explorer who visited the coast of North America in 1497. Fletcher may be drawing on Lelewel's work for this claim.

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sixteenth centuries they held the whaling trade of Europe almost exclusively in their hands. All along the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence, the coasts of Labrador, and the shores adjacent, they have left memorials of their existence, footprints of their coming, in innumerable myths, legends and names of localities. Then the Bretons of France seem to have assumed the predominance. Early in the sixteenth century the town of Brest, now called Bradore, was founded in the Strait of Belle Isle, in the interest of the fishing trade. It became the centre of French dominion in these parts. Before the close of the century it had grown to be the chief town of New France and the residence of the Governor. The ruins and terraces of the old town yet remain visible on the iron-bound coast, to shew how the vast and expansive trading energies of the time set at naught alike the horrors of a desert shore and the perils of a dark and stormy sea.

It was pleasant to ruminate of these matters, or to talk them over with the co-mates of my voyage—Mr. Wilkens, a graduate of McGill in applied science, and Mr. W. Scott, a most intelligent officer of the H. B. Company. These two with myself and my son formed the whole of the party.[22]

But now the time came when we must think of our departure. Our last day's work was done, and it was with a feeling, almost of regret, that we entered our boat on the last homeward trip, from the inner channel to the schooner. The distance was some five miles, and each took his place in silence as he looked round for the last time on the well-known features of the haunts which daily usage had made familiar. Silently, save for the measured beat of the oars, we swept slowly past the grand and imposing show of the multitudinous capes and headlands. The night was resplendent. The sky clear and starlit. The moon descending in the west cast a long train of brilliant scintillations on the level

22 In recounting this journey in his autobiography, Fletcher's son Sidney provides a more complete description of the party, which included

> Mr. Hudson, a sailmaker. He had been told by a schooner captain of a wonderful body of ore which had been discovered on the Labrador Coast. He and Mr. Champion organized a small company, and a party was sent there to examine this deposit. This party included my father, who offered his services as surveyor, with myself as his assistant; Mr. Wilkins, a young geologist from McGill College; Mr. Scott, who had been in the service of the Hudson Bay Company for a long time on that Coast; the man who had seen this deposit; two other men who understood drilling and rock work; and lastly a good cook to look after the commissariat department and the comfort of the party. The schooner *Philomene* was chartered with Captain Z. Gagnon, and two seamen. The schooner was quite new, clean, and comfortable; and the captain was very cautious and capable. We left in the middle of June, our destination being a point on the Coast near St. Augustine Bay.

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water before us. The very air seemed soft and balmy. One steep tall rock rose up beside us, its head hid in mist, such as that, one might fancy, on which the great protagonist of the Athenian Drama,[23] fettered yet uncomplaining, had ennobled and sanctified suffering. Again, we passed the "island of echoes," where so many times we had tested the manifold reverberations of sound. It was all silent now. But, as it stood there alone, half seen, half hid in vapour, it seemed to suggest that other "island rock" in the far east, whose echoes of old were roused by the war-song of the Greeks on the morning of Salamis.[24] It was a delicious hour of dreaminess. A large seal, the only living thing we saw, seized perhaps with a fit of very excusable curiosity, followed us till we reached the schooner. Once arrived there, we were not ashamed to exchange imagination and romance for a substantial reality in the shape of a very solid repast, and turned in, feeling at peace with ourselves and with all mankind.

On the following morning we hoisted sail and prepared for the homeward voyage. Having gained the offing, I was struck with the effect of distance on the stern and rugged scenery of the coast. The eye is deceived by the green moss and lichens which cover the shore, and one could easily fancy it is a cleared and cultivated country rather than a mass of barren rocks. Perhaps it was in this way, if the story be true as told by Joachim Lelewel, that Gaspard Cortereal, the Portuguese navigator, having, in 1500, coasted the Gulf of St. Lawrence, eastward to the straits, called the land to the north TERRA DE LABRADOR, *"terre de laboureur," "des agriculteuls,"* the cultivator's land.[25] However this be, it appears that the indistinctness of the facts has necessitated a mythus and that we are called on to believe in a mythical personage, one Labrador, a Basque whaler of the 15th century, from whom the country took its name. Be this as it may, it is impossible not to believe that a gradual refrigeration of climate is now going on in all northern lands. Perhaps the earth is now entering on another glacial period. The ice is increasing, the growth of forest trees is retreating southward. In Newfoundland and the Saguenay district the traces of a gigantic forest flora are still visible. Many of these subarctic lands which are now hopelessly sterile, may have been quite cultivable four or five centuries ago. During the last few years the ice has increased far towards the south; and between Greenland and

23 Prometheus.

24 The Battle of Salamis (480 BCE) between King Themistocles of the Greek states and the Persian Empire under Xerxes.

25 "Land of the labourers" and hence farmers' land.

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the Arctic Sea colossal masses of ice have accumulated. On European coasts navigators now frequently find ice in latitudes where it never existed before during the summer months, and the cold prevailing upon the Scandinavian peninsula in recent summers seems due to the masses of ice which are floating in the region where the Gulf Stream bends towards these coasts. The unusual vicinity of this ice has rendered the climate of Iceland so cold that corn no longer ripens there, and the Icelanders, in fear of a coming famine and icy climate, are beginning to migrate to the western continent.

It were needless to recapitulate the events of our homeward voyage. A few scattered notes may suffice. At noon on the first day (15 July), fog coming on, we dropped anchors in a harbour just west of the Boule, our bowsprit almost touching the rock. The fog lightening a little we got as far as *Tête à Baleine à l'Est* (Mr. Cowes), where we remained. Just before getting in, a large whale rose ahead, nearly under the schooner's bows. The captain, who was at the helm, mistook it for a rock, and put the tiller hard aport in extreme trepidation. On the evening of the next day, after a foggy morning, followed by a headwind, we got as far as Tabatière Bay, the residence of a son of the late well-known Mr. Samuel Robertson, who in his lifetime acquired large wealth by seal fishing.

Then followed a spell of heavy weather with frequent headwinds. The swell of the sea was tremendous. On the 22nd July at 1 a.m. we passed Natashquan. It was pitch dark at the time: I was on deck but could see nothing. The captain, however, who was on the lookout exclaimed, with true professional instinct, "*Nous avons passé Natashquan—la mer est changee!*"[26] He explained to me that off the point there was always a heavy ripple and swell, which we had now passed.

In truth it was a dreary time along there, between Scylla and Charybdis—Labrador on the one hand and Anticosti on the other. I felt disposed to give prompt credit to the Acadian tradition, that God gave Labrador and Anticosti to Cain as a heritage, pronouncing on these lands, at the same time, a sentence of perpetual silence and desolation. The Indians called the island "Natiscoti," the "country of wailing," whence, by metathesis, the modern name Anticosti.[27] The schooner anchored at the west point for a few hours, and we looked with

26 "We have passed Natashquan—the sea is changed."

27 Anticosti Island is southwest and passed days earlier in the narrative. The wailing likely refers to the wind of the island, but this is not the meaning of its name for the Innu or Mi'kmaq. Samuel de Champlain spelled the island's name as "Antiscoti" in 1612, which originates the metathesis Fletcher notes.

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awe on the low and treacherous coast, the scene of so many shipwrecks. How many gallant hearts have here gone down in darkness amid the stifling waters, or, haply, have famished on the land, amid the agonies of protracted dissolution. All honour then, to the brain that has conceived, and to the energy that has carried through, that telegraphic system in the Gulf, for the protection and solace of the imperilled mariner.[28] It is a measure of magnificent philanthropy. Let us hope that the life of its author, who is also the founder of this Society, may be long and happily preserved.[29]

Yet, side by side with the dangers and difficulties of Gulf navigation, have appeared from time to time, perhaps as their necessary outcome and complement, repeated acts of quiet and unobtrusive heroism. An episode in the life of an Anticosti lighthouse keeper may serve as an illustration and an example; and with this brief narrative my notes of travel may be fitly brought to a close.

In the autumn of 1869, the family of Edward Pope, keeper of the Ellis Bay lighthouse, was stricken down by typhoid fever, and, to add to his misfortunes, the revolving apparatus of his light broke. The Government steamer had gone. Pope had no means of communicating with the Marine Department at Quebec, or elsewhere. The light revolved, or flashed, as the technical phrase is, every minute and a half, and, if it flashed no more, it would probably be mistaken by passing vessels, in that region of fog, for the stationary light at the west point of the island, and thus lead to loss of life. Pope found that, with a little exertion, he could turn it and make it flash, and at once determined to take the place of the automatic gear. Accordingly this humble hero sat in the turret, with his watch by his side, turning the light regularly at the allotted time every night, from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., from the middle of August until the first of December, and from the first of April until the end of June, when the Government steamer came to his relief with a new apparatus. All through the first season Pope's daughter and grandchildren were ill unto death, with nobody save him to nurse them.

28 Telegraph lines were established between Anticosti, Newfoundland, and the mainland across the 1850s.

29 The reference is to the Geographical Society of Quebec, for which Henry Hopper Miles (1818–1895) was the first president. Notably, Fletcher's praise follows after Miles was censured for comments made in March 1881 in the *Montréal Gazette* that led to his forced retirement. His reference to "Roman Catholic dominance over the Department of Public Instruction" was seen by Gédéon Ouimet as insubordinate, despite a public disclaimer (Christie 1990, 737–38). Miles is best known for his book *The History of Canada Under French Régime, 1535–1763* that sought to redress the bias against French history.

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He waited on them tenderly during the day, but as night fell on the iron-bound coast he hastened to his vigil in the turret, steeling his heart against their plaints, and doing his duty to his employers and to humanity at large with unflinching devotion. In the second season, his daughter, who had lived through the fever, took turns with him in the light-room. This man may have saved a thousand lives. He died in 1872, his deed unchronicled, his life unknown; yet he was a true hero, and worthy to take a place in that Valhalla of lofty spirits whose highest ambition has been that of doing good to their fellowmen.

E.T.F.
Quebec, 14 March 1881

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Notes from Victoria, BC

1890

Knowing your scientific proclivities, and especially your partiality for meteorological studies, I enclose you herewith Mr. Livock's schedule (just issued) of the temperature and rainfall here for the past year, and also Captain Peele's New Westminster observations for the period same.[1]

In these schedules I do not find that the dewpoint is anywhere noted. I regret this, as I have heard it stated that, although the rainfall at Westminster is much greater than here, the climate there is drier; the atmosphere here being, in general, almost saturated with moisture. This damp air is carried over to the mainland, and the moisture is there precipitated; the intervals of precipitation being comparatively dry. Certainly the dampness here is quite perceptible. In summer, sitting outside after sunset is almost an impossibility. The air, even in midsummer, becomes, of a sudden, chilly, and damp. The climate appears to me quite unfavourable for all who suffer from affections of the throat or lungs. On the mainland the contrast of the seasons is more marked. The winters are colder, and the summers warmer and drier. I suppose it is the immense evaporation from the Pacific, together with the warmth of the Japan current, that gives our Victoria climate its peculiarly damp and equable character.

We are now scarce past the middle of March, and the temperature is already in the forties. This morning at 8, it was 41, and the day has been pleasant and

1 In its original publication, this letter is prefaced by the editorial comment that "Mr. Fletcher is the author of *The Lost Island* (Atlantis) a poem which, when it appeared in our columns some time ago, attracted not a little attention" (Fletcher 1890, 277). I have been unable to locate this suggested textual witness to the poem. There was a review of *Nestorius* in *The Week* by Fidelis two years later that mentions *The Lost Island* (1892, 762), and "appeared in" likely refers to a similar review.

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sunny. The trees are budding everywhere, and the spring may be said to have fairly commenced. There has been no snow on the ground since the beginning of January. The winters here are almost without snow.

The Beacon Hill park, a favourite place of resort, is now again becoming crowded on Saturday afternoons. It is a delightful place, though rather spoiled, many think, by injudicious and expensive attempts at improvement. The surroundings in the way of sea, mountains, and forests, are highly picturesque. Steamers and ships are constantly passing in the straits; some of the latter come from British ports round Cape Horn. It is quite a sight to see, on a fine summer afternoon, the innumerable army of baby-carriages (!), and the fair Victorians, in their quaint costume, watching the progress of a game of football or lacrosse. The latter game, I am happy to say, is gaining favour here, and on the mainland; and bids fair to banish that odious "baseball," a mere resuscitation, I am told, of the "rounders" formerly played in the slums and by-places of London.

The town itself is certainly growing. Within the last few months an immense church has been completed for the Presbyterians; and buildings of equal size are contemplated for the Methodists and Romish sects.[2] The Anglicans will no doubt follow suit, as their present cathedral is not over large. The leading denominations are all fairly well represented, and, none having any great preponderance in numbers, we all get along in peace and harmony. May it always be so!

Apropos d'église I would you were here to enjoy the superb rendition of the services in our English cathedral. The reading and intoning are alike excellent. One would say that the officiating priests had received a special training in this part of their duties. I have nowhere heard the sublime liturgy of the Church more impressively recited. For the rest, I confess that, here as elsewhere, we suffer under the infliction of a married clergy. We do not see much of these gentlemen outside the church walls. A great gulf seems to lie between the clergy and laity. Burdened as most of our presbyters are with wives and families, they cannot but be heavily handicapped in the performance of their pastoral functions.

Pleasant enough is the living in this little outpost of the Dominion, with its mixed Oriental and Caucasian population, and its white cottages embosomed

2 This would be St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at 924 Douglas Street (complete in 1890), the Metropolitan Methodist Church at 907 Pandora Avenue (built in 1890 and now the Victoria Conservatory of Music), and St. Andrew's Cathedral at 740 View Street (begun in 1890 and completed in 1892). The Anglican Cathedral is Christ Church Cathedral, a wooden building at the time raised in 1872, but in 1891 the process to design and build the current cathedral began.

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in foliage. Of necessity, some things are wanting. The town is young. Books are scarce. Art is at its nadir. We miss the large libraries, the scientific and literary associations, and the art galleries of the Eastern provinces; a contrast the more striking, as in the older French communities in the East, the literary aspirations are immense, and some one has said that almost every third man you meet in Quebec is either a poet or a historian. But these are the natural defect of a new colony, with a limited population. Time will cure all this. A facile communication with the East is now open. We receive from that side large and constant accessions to our numbers. We are part and parcel of a Dominion that bestrides the entire continent. The great centres of Canadian civilization, as Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa, are now easily accessible, and we cannot fail to profit by the connection.

Laus Deo in excelsis: the genial springtime is already upon us.[3] Let us walk out by the side of the "many sounding sea,"[4] with its oak-covered land-slopes on one side and the waters of the interminable Pacific on the other. What can be finer than this glow of the setting sun, reflected on a thousand ripples—the "innumerable laughter of the sea waves," as old Aeschylus has it? So, too, the Roman Catullus, not insensible to these grand influences, has described the waves of a placid sea, "*quae leviter resonant plagnore cachinni*"—"Which sound gently with a noise of laughter." Let us rest here; seated on a drifted pinestem and bathed in a flood of sunshine. Who is it, Persius I think? who speaks of the "*aprici sense*"?[5] A most happy epithet. "Old men that love the open sunshine." For what can be more pleasant, to those whose years are many than to bask in the sun, and feel one's energies revive under the kindly warmth, the blessed and healing influences of the Lord of light and life? They say that in the childhood of the world men worshipped the sun as a Deity. A noble and natural impulse; for surely it is His most glorious image.

E. T. Fletcher
16 March 1890

3 The Latin phrase means "Praise be to God in the highest."

4 Homer's epithet from the *Iliad*, i, 34.

5 "Sunny sense."

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Letter on British Columbia

1892

To F. D. Tims,
Recording Secretary of the Quebec Geographical Society

New Westminster, BC, 24 January 1892

My dear friend,

It was with very much pleasure, I assure you, that I received your last interesting letter, not having heard from you, for so long a time previously . . .

I was much pleased with your account of the buildings recently put up in the ancient capital. Having passed half a century of my life there, I look upon it almost as my birthplace and shall always take an interest in all that goes on in the old fort . . . Our public and private affairs, in British Columbia, seem to be still progressing favourably. Here, in Westminster, we are now in direct communication with Seattle and the cities of the south, by the completion of the Great Northern Railway which has its terminus on the south bank of the Fraser, immediately opposite our city.[1] The mails to Oregon and Washington States are also taken by this route and the time of transit is greatly shortened. I frequently correspond with my daughter who is now at Vancouver, Washington, and the letters, which formerly took four days in transit, now take only two.

1 The Great Northern Railway connected Vancouver to Saint Paul, Minnesota, via Seattle. These rail lines in North Surrey still exist in the neighbourhoods of South Westminster and Port Mann.

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Buildings are going up all round. We have electric lights and a city tramway since last year; and there is now a tramcar connecting with Vancouver, twelve miles distant, every two hours.

It must be confessed that our population is made up of rather heterogeneous elements. Apart of the heathen Chinese, the noble red man of the forest, and a few wanderers from the Great Republic, we have: 1) the native British Columbians, chiefly miners of 1858 or their descendants; 2) the native Britishers or those who have emigrated direct from the old country; 3) those who have come from the Eastern Provinces of the Dominion of Canada and are styled, half contemptuously, "Canadians." These latter have been looked upon hitherto, with something of dislike and disfavour by the others, being, as a rule, better informed than the native British Columbians and less angular and prejudiced than the native Britishers. But the tide seems to be now turning; so many professional and well educated men have come in from the East, that they now come to the front in everything and the native British Columbians and the native Britishers find themselves compelled, *nolentes volentes*, to take a back seat and moderate themselves accordingly.[2]

It is a little unfortunate, I think, that the *substratum* of the community has been made up by miners. From their old habits of recklessness and gambling, they have infused a spirit of irregularity and carelessness in all our transactions, which it will take some time to get rid of. They make bad farmers, are always thriftless and improvident, and, in many cases, mortgage their farms for the loan of a few hundred dollars, which they repay, despite any written contract, when it suits their convenience. It is from their ignorance and apathy that the fruit trees in the province have degenerated. The apples and pears, which I have tasted, do not bear comparison, in my estimation, as to delicacy and flavour, with those of the Eastern provinces. Thence, too, the awful toughness of the beef we are doomed to eat. Oh! for the tender juicy meat of those Eastern pastures! . . . Neither can the British immigrants be considered, as a rule, fair types of the land to which they belong. To say nothing of their ungracious *morgue* and insular prejudice, they are, in general, men who have failed in their own country, either from incapacity or want of stability, and come to British Columbia as a sort of desperate venture.

But in respect to climate, it must be confessed, we have advantages. Throughout the year, there is a tolerably even uniformity in the temperature; it is never

2 Latin: "Without desire" or against their wish.

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oppressively hot in summer and never much below freezing in winter. Neither are we troubled with those storms of wind or cyclones, which devastate the flat country east of the Rockies. The rainfall on the Pacific coast is considerable and increases as it trends towards the north. I find the climate of New Westminster more pleasant than that of Victoria. The rainfall is greater here; but the intervals are drier; and the heavy sea-fogs of the Island, with their penetrating chills, are here replaced by the milder fogs of the Fraser river.

No doubt, the mildness of the winter is somewhat adverse to certain forms of vegetable growth. The larger trees become soft and spongy in fibre (I refer to those which are deciduous) from the frequent winter thaws. They do not seem to get enough sleep. The oaks in the vicinity of Victoria *(Quercus garryiana Doug)* are, in general, of a dwarfed and scrubby appearance, and the timber is worthless.[3] I have heard the Honble [*sic*] Mr. Richards declare "there was not enough hardwood on the Island to make an axe handle." The maple, here, is the *Acer macrophyllum,* or large headed kind, of small stature, and very different from the stately sugar maples of the East. The finest trees are the large conifers on the highest lands of the interior, the gigantic red cedar (*Thuja gigantea),* the *Pinus monticola,* and others of that family.

As to the fisheries, the salmon canning on the Fraser is a well-known branch of industry. The generic name of our salmon is *Oncorhyncus* or hook-nosed, according to Ashdown Green[4]; it is different from the Eastern kind, and, to my mind, much less palatable. It is soft and comparatively tasteless, as are all the fish out here, perhaps from the higher temperature of the Pacific waters.

The expenses of living, in this part of the world, are rather high. Medical and legal fees are double those in the East; house-rent, clothing, dry goods, beef and mutton, and servants are all more expensive here than with you. By the way, I may note, in reference to the last item, that this may be considered a sort of servants' paradise. A white servant or housemaid, can scarcely be had under fifteen dollars a month; and these are generally young women from the country districts, coarse, awkward, incapable and indolent. The best servants are the Chinese; but a good Chinaman is not to be had under twenty dollars; and

3 *Quercus garryana*, the Oregon White Oak, is commonly known as the Garry Oak in British Columbia.

4 Ashdown Henry Green was a surveyor who worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Born in London, England on 18 August 1840, he studied engineering in England before moving to British Columbia in 1862.

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some object to them. But they certainly are perfection itself in that line: rapid in their movements noiseless, industrious, clever, and obliging. These people are under a sort of cloud hereabouts. As craftsmen and labourers, they do their work conscientiously and well, and, from their frugal style of living at lower wages than white labourers who in consequence, are unwearied in their hatred and persecution.[5] And the worst of it is that these latter, who are often men of brutalized habits and savage instincts, have most of them, in the present low state of the franchise, votes to give, both in municipal and provincial elections, and consequently are flattered and made much of by public candidates. To me, and I should think to all disinterested persons, these quiet celestials seem to be a very useful part of the community, inoffensive, law abiding and laborious. I fear I am wearying you with these details, but I thought you would like to hear something of this remote and interesting section of the great Dominion. This young province, whatever may be said, is full of life and vigor. In course of time, no doubt, changes will be made, and defects will be swept away; but it possesses already advantages in which no change is possible or necessary: magnificent scenery, a healthy climate, an ample seaboard, and an interior country of unsurpassed natural resources.

Believe me to remain
always
Very truly yours
E. T. Fletcher

5 Fletcher's sons worked in Yale and other communities where they witnessed the Chinese labourers for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railways, including the general racist antagonism towards Chinese labour under the excuse that it would drive down pay and limit employment opportunities. His son, Sidney Ashe Fletcher, recounts this in his travels to Emory Bar and Yale in the Fraser Canyon.

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Reminiscences of Old Quebec

1896 [1913]

Imperious, throned above the blue expanse
  Of flowing tide that laps the cliff, and slips
  Past prisoned logs and chains of anchored ships,
Straining in leash for swift deliverance!
The Old ill brooks the How; old world romance
  Invades the mart, breathes from the muzzled lips
  Of war-dogs couchant on their curb, and drips
From blood-stained battlement. Anon, perchance,
  From cloister-bell quaint summons tinkling flows,
    Waking pale ghosts that flit in cowl and hood,
    Or stately glide, or dank in grim array—
Dream-shades of vanished night. Morn, breaking, glows,
Flushing roof, spire and frowning gun in flood
Of sunlight, presage of a new-born day!
      S. M. Baylis[1]

In the year 1827, the Atlantic had not yet been traversed by steamships. Comfortable vessels, for passage, were not often to be met with. In the beginning of September, of that year, my father, having received an appointment in the Imperial Customs, embarked with his family on board the brig *Amethyst*, Capt. Thompson, of Gravesend, and arrived at Quebec in the middle of October; the voyage having lasted about six weeks. The little brig, of 250 tons, was an

1 "Quebec" (1891), by Samuel Mathewson Baylis (1854–1941) (Baylis 1897, 192).

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excellent sea-boat, but was dreadfully shaken, in mid-ocean, by contrary winds. From the frequent pitching the jibboom was sprung three times, and as many times renewed. Our fellow-passengers were Captain J. W. Clemow, half-pay 41st. Regiment, H. Desrivières Beaubien, William Dunn, and A. L. Smith. With a feeling of intense relief we at length found ourselves in the River Saint Lawrence, and watched, when the river narrowed, the shifting and picturesque scenery on both sides. Finally, we dropped anchor before the Citadel of Quebec, on the evening of Saturday the 20th October.

The weather was fine and clear; the air soft and balmy: and the tin roofs of the city and suburbs shone brilliantly in the last days of the setting sun. Wearied with our long and fatiguing voyage, we could appreciate, to the full, the fine panorama around us. To the east lay the green heights of Point Levis and the Island of Orleans: to the north, the Beauport shore, a western Bay of Naples, fading away in a curve of long perspective, with its line of white cottages, towards Montmorency and the Falls: while to the west and south extended the broad St. Lawrence with its forest of shipping, and the city itself, a maze of tin roofs, spires, and bastions, with the fortifications of Cape Diamond surmounting all. A splendid scene and one which has been many times described. As we stood on the deck, the Angelus rang from the churches, the military bugles sounded, darkness came, and the city seemed ablaze with lights. Some of the passengers went ashore and, returning, brought us specimens of the current coin. There were Spanish pistareens, half-crowns of the times of the Stuarts, and Mexican dollars. The copper pieces were of almost infinite variety, half-penny tokens, bank-coins, some again with Wellington's head on the obverse, and some with General Brock's. So came the night, clear and starlit, with innumerable ship-lights around, and no sound to be heard saw the occasional hail of seamen, and the rhythmic plashing of the waters.

The boarding-house of Mrs. McLaughlan, to which we then removed, was in Palace Street, two doors below the intersection of the Ste. Helen, now McMahon Street. The corner house, since burned and rebuilt, was then occupied by Mr. William Wilson, of H. M. Customs. Our fellow lodgers were a Mr. Elliott and his two sisters, who had, like ourselves, a suite of rooms of their own. The next house below was Dr. Caldwell's, whose brother, then in Montreal, was also a doctor and had attended my father, when wounded, in the West Indies. Lower down, showing a front of three windows on the first floor, was the residence of the Ross family, the original home of the present Hon. D. A. Ross, for several years my schoolmate, both at Dr. Wilkie's and afterwards at the Grand

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Seminaire.[2] Further down still, at the corner facing the old Arsenal, was the house of Dr. Painehaud, a worthy and somewhat eccentric practitioner of the old school. His son was also a schoolfellow of mine at Dr. Wilkie's. Below the arsenal was Palace Gate, since removed, and the *enceinte* of the city wall.

Palace Street was then, as now, one of the main thoroughfares of the town: and through the gate there poured continuously a stream of vehicles from the outer parishes. After the snow fell, the scene was lively and striking, from the number of loaded sleighs labouring up the slope, with the habitant drivers, clad in heavy home-spun, with sash and *bonnet rouge*. There was an incessant cracking of whips, and an urging on of their horses with cries of "*marche donc gris*,"[3] coupled with every form of vociferous adjuration. Intermingled with the procession was the "cariste" of ancient build, two-seated, short, and heavy, with a buffalo robe in the hinder seat for the comfort of the travellers.[4] In the intense cold of winter, the community dressed warmly, of course. Furs were universally worn. The ladies had bonnets and heavy muffs of marten and other costly skins. The men wore huge flat-topped caps, with ears, voluminous comforters, or skin boas, round the neck, and gauntlets of imposing dimensions on the hands; while the nether limbs were protected by thick black overalls, or woollen stockings, reaching above the knee, and terminating below in feet of cloth, strongly soled, these being drawn over the ordinary boot, fastened with a buckle at the instep, and a sort of garter under the knee to prevent them slipping down. The overcoats were short in those days, which made the protection of the lower limbs the more necessary. In severe weather the cheeks and nose were often frozen. This happened frequently to the sentinels at the city gates. In general, as soon as the fatal white spot appeared on the face, the victim was at once informed of the fact by the passers-by, some of the more zealous even rushing up with a handful of snow and commencing to rub vigorously the part affected, with the hasty explanation: "Your nose is frozen, sir!"

Round the corner just above, on the south side of Helen (now McMahon) Street, was the Natural History Museum of M. Chassé, subsequently removed

2 David Alexander Ross (1819–1897), a lawyer who twice served in the Québec government, first as attorney general and then as a cabinet minister, and was also active in the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.

3 "Giddy up, Gray.

4 Today, *cariste* refers to the driver of a fork lift, but Fletcher uses the term in an older sense, as the name of a type of carriage.

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to the Parliament building, near Prescott Gate. Nearly opposite us, but a little higher up, was the dry-goods store of Henry Trinder and Horatio Carwell, and between that and St. John Street was (and is) the large building known as the Albion Hotel, and occupied, as such, by Messrs. Payne, Hoffman, and Kirwin, successively. Opposite to this, on Palace Street, was the dry-goods store of Robert Symes, known, for many years, as an active and useful justice of the peace: and on beyond, at the corner of St. John Street, at the level of the ground floor, stood the celebrated wooden figure of General Wolfe, life-size, and in full regimentals, now exalted to the second story. A short distance west of this corner, and on the same side, was Mailhot's Hotel, then the property of Chief Justice Sewell. It has disappeared, to make room for the lofty structure known as Casey's building. Here, in one of the upper rooms—I have been assured by Mr. Casey himself—the Hon. John A. McDonald and D'Arcy McGee often met, in later years, to spend a quiet convivial evening. One may imagine the flashes of wit and humour that illumined these Noctes Ambroisianae?[5]

Having been duly installed in December at the Rev. D. Wilkie's Classical School, in Garden Street, my daily walk lay along Palace, St. John, and Fabrique Streets, the marketplace, and the close of the Anglican Cathedral, to the intersection of the Ruelle des Ursulines [Rue Sainte-Ursule]. Fabrique Street was at that time bounded on the south by a low wall and fence, separating it from the grounds of the "Jesuit's Barracks," a square of solid stone buildings formerly occupied by the Order of Jesuits, a corporation dissolved long ago by Papal edict, and, on the death of the last member, escheated to the Crown. These buildings were used thereafter as barracks and were demolished quite recently. On the other side of Fabrique Street was the bookstore of Mr. Horan, whose son was afterwards R[oman]. C[atholic]. Bishop of Kingston. It was here that we purchased our French schoolbooks. At the intersection of St. Anne and Garden Streets, and on the west side of the latter, stood the building known subsequently as the Haymarket Theatre: and on its northerly face was displayed, during my schoolboy days, a painted wooden sign, representing the engagement of the Shannon and Chesapeake. In this theatre, a few years later, I saw the play

5 Fletcher refers here to the *Noctes Ambrosianae* (Ambrosian Nights), a series of imagined conversations that were published in Edinburgh's *Blackwood's Magazine* from 1822 to 1835. The exchanges take place among assorted fictional characters—many of them clearly based on well-known individuals—who gather for conversation in the city's Ambrose Tavern.

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of *Douglas* performed by the students of the Reverend Mr. Burrage's school. The Prologue was written by Mr. Fred. Collard. In it, speaking of the players, he asked: . . . Who will have the courage to intercede for them with Dr. Burrage?

This upper part of the building was subsequently utilized as a gymnasium by Dr. Hartney (Nov. 1835), and again as an Auctioneer's showroom for prints and engravings: it is now the Russell House. At the corner of the Ursuline lane and Garden Street was the well-known circulating Library, a fine collection of standard works in light literature, superintended by Miss Cary, a sister of Mr. Joseph Cary, afterwards Deputy Inspector General, and of Mr. Thomas Cary, proprietor of the *Quebec Mercury*. Mr. Wilkie's school was in Gardener Street, directly opposite this corner. My worthy teacher had, at that time, as assistant, a Mr. Johnson. There was also a writing master, whose chief occupation was the mending of pens, quills being then in vogue. Mr. Johnson was shortly afterwards succeeded by Mr. Peter Ramage, an excellent Latinist, and most kind-hearted man, much liked and respected by the boys. Among the students, I recollect Jerry Leaycraft, an esteemed friend, son of a West Indian merchant, Richard Thorne, of Little St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, Charles O. Sheppard, son of the Hon. William Sheppard of Woodfield, J. Brauncis, a talented musician, and in 1832, master of the Quebec Artillery Band, D. McLean Stewart, son of Charles Grey Stewart, of H. M. Customs, David A. Ross, later a Member of the Quebec Government, James Greene, son of the clerk of the Crown, T. C. Lee, afterwards a shipbuilder, Joseph and William Morrin, sons of the doctor, young Chapais, a prominent politician in later days, Robert Christie, son of the Member for Gaspé, James Lane, son of the registrar, John Torrance, afterwards an Episcopal clergyman, Daniel Wilkie, a nephew of the principal, and William Stott, a relative and adopted son of Captain Stott of Mount Pleasant, his original name, Wilson, having been changed by royal permission.

I remember reciting, at the Xmas examinations of this school, in 1831, Anacreon's famous ode to a Carrier-Pigeon. Mr. A. Girod, the noted *littérateur* and republican, was present and expressed his satisfaction. In the following February, he read a paper, on the War of Independence in Columbia, before the Historical Society. A few years later, he took part in the conflict at St. Eustache, and, fleeing thence, he died by his own hand.

In May 1828, the family removed from town to Mount Pleasant, about a mile west of the City, having leased a small cottage on the south side of the Ste. Foy Road, and the first house beyond the tollgate. It was subsequently occupied by Mrs. William Stevenson. Our landlord was Mr. James Hunt, the Wine

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merchant. Mrs. Young lived opposite; afterwards, Mrs. Byng Gatty, and then the Lane family. Next to this, westward, lived Mr. Bignell, at that time postmaster, and subsequently Mr. E. Burroughs, prothonotary. The next house still farther westward, was the residence of Mr. Snelling, D.C.G. In the next house to our own, on the west side, and separated from it by a small lane, lived, for some time, Mr. James Hastings Kerr, son of the judge, and afterwards, in succession, Mr. Wm. Newton, Mr. W. H. Griffin, of the Post Office Department, and Captain McDougall, of the 79th Highlanders.[6] Here we remained for many years. We christened the house "York Cottage," my father having formerly served in the Royal York Rangers.

In the year 1832, I was sent, as a boarder, to the Grand Seminaire. Here I met with several young men who afterwards attained eminence. Among these were J. P. O. Chauveau, the Abbé Tanguay, and D. A. Ross. I belonged to the third class, in [the] charge of Professor Normandeau, who afterwards seceded from his church and became a Protestant minister. Our instructor in English, who came at stated hours, was Professor McDonald, co-editor of the *Quebec Gazette*, an accomplished scholar and excellent linguist, afterwards had charge of the Establishment for the Deaf and Dumb, on the Esplanade Hill. I have in my possession the copy of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*[7] which formerly belonged to him, and in which he has carefully noted some of the finest passages, among others the well-known stanzas on the death of Clorinda. He had a theory, I recollect, that the terminals in the genitive of English nouns was a contraction of the possessive pronoun "his."

The Rev. M. Briand, if I recollect right, was at that time director, and the Rev. Mr. Holmes was *préfet des Etudes*. The latter was considered one of the finest pulpit orators of his day, and at the interment of Bishop Panet, who was buried in the adjoining parish church in February 1833, he was selected as the orator to pronounce the funeral sermon. I was present at this service: it was most impressive. The two choirs, answering each other, the antiphonal chanting, now

6 The 79th Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders were intermittently stationed in Québec City between 1825 and 1836. Between 1828 and 1833, they were stationed in Montréal.

7 Torquato Tasso's (1544–1595) *La Gerusalemme liberate* is an epic poem of the First Crusade, first published in 1581. Clorinda is a warrior-maiden who joins the Muslims but is baptised by Trancredi, who is in love with her, after she is mortally wounded. The translated titled Fletcher uses suggests he is likely referring to the 1763 translation by John Hoole, as Edward Fairfax's 1818 translation bears the title *Godfrey of Bulloigne; or, The Recovery of Jerusalem*.

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sad and wailing, and now lofty and exultant, the immense multitude of people, and the swell of the great organ, rolling in thunder through the vast interior, as the body sank slowly through the aperture in the church floor, all this, in its grandeur and solemnity, is a memory not to be forgotten. On Thursday, we generally took a walk outside, sometimes as far as the *Canardière*, on the Beauport Road—always two by two, with a priest in charge. The hours of rising and retiring were of course early: and on a dark winter's morning it was anything but pleasant to be roused by the ecclesiastic of the dormintaire, with his "*Dominus vobiscum*" the signal for getting up, to which we were expected to respond with "*et cum spiritu tuo*."[8] At meals, each four students made a "plat," acted as servitors, in succession. During the repast, one of the boarders read from a sort of pulpit. In my day Crevier's Roman Emperors[9] was the book selected. I entertain very pleasant recollections of my stay in this institution. As to the studies, "*militavi non sine gloria* [I did not fight without glory]," obtaining a prize, and an "*accessit*," or certificate of good standing. On one occasion I made something of a hit by a string of verses on ancient Rome.[10]

For this I was rewarded by being permitted to give the "*Deo Oratias*" next day, after the midday meal. Nor was my acquaintance limited to the routine teachers. As students of *Belles-Lettres*, David Ross and myself were often permitted to visit the Revd. Father McDonald, professor of theology, a most kind and genial man, who read to us many *chefs-d'oeuvre* of literature, and descanted on their beauties. Under his guidance we also refreshed our knowledge of Greek, which was not taught in the ordinary classes. I was sorry, indeed, when the time came to bid adieu to the worthy professor, and I felt that our pleasant evening "praelections" were at an end and knew that I should hear no more his jovial laugh or hear him inquire about "the news of the town."

Having left the Seminaire and entered the arena of business as an architectural student, I resided with my father for several years. On Sunday we attended Sewell's chapel, built by Chief Justice Sewell, and for many years served by his son, Edmond Willoughby, who was ordained a priest in December 1827. The

8 "The Lord be with you" and "and with your spirit."

9 Jean Baptiste Louis Crevier's *The History of the Roman Emperors From Augustus to Constantine* was originally published in French (1749–1755) and an English translation in ten volumes appeared in 1814. Fletcher may have read it in either language since he does not use the full title nor Crevier's full name (both Anglicized in the translation).

10 These do not appear to have survived.

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latter married a daughter of Bishop Stewart, who preached here occasionally. He had a fancy for quoting from Tertullian. In rear of this building was the circus, afterwards known as the Theatre Royal. The original manager appears to have been a Mr. Blanchard. I was present, while yet a schoolboy, at the performance of *Timour the Tartar*,[11] a grand spectacular play, in September 1830. A Miss Emery played Zorilda, and the role of Timour himself was taken by a Mr. Gale. This gentleman had a tremendous bass voice, a veritable "basso profundo," and his "Zorilda, is it possible?" was something to be remembered. The Circus was closed in May 1831, by Mr. Page at that time manager. His last appearance was as Scaramouchi, in the pantomime of Don Juan. I see it noted in a diary that we all went to the benefit of Mr. West, a noted equestrian, who had leased the Mount Pleasant Hotel, in our vicinity. A proposition was now made to restore the Haymarket building to its former uses as a Theatre: the stage, in the Circus, being at an inconvenient distance from the audience. In pursuance of this scheme, the requisite repairs and alterations were made, and the Haymarket now received the title of the New Theatre Royal. There, in the following August (1831), Charles Kean appeared as Duke Aranza in *The Honeymoon*. I find it noted that the heat was intense! However, the Circus building seems to have been still preferred, for during September Kean played Shylock and Othello in the Old Theatre Royal, where, on the 1st of October, I saw him appear as Brutus in Howard Payne's tragedy of *Brutus or the Fall of Tarquin*.[12] It was a most thrilling impersonation. I can never forget the rich music of his voice, his terrific burst of energy in denouncing Slatus, or his pathetic remonstrance of his sons, calling on them to meet their death "with a more manly heart."[13] Strikingly effective, too, was the closing tableau, where, on the signal being given that the execution had been carried out, he falls back, fainting, into the arms of his attendants, with the words, "Justice is satisfied, and Rome is free."[14]

11 See M. G. Lewis's *Timour the Tartar: Grand Romantic Melo Drama*.

12 John Howard Payne's *Brutus; or, The Fall of Tarquin*. Payne (1791–1852) was an American-born British playwright.

13 Fletcher may be relying on his diaries here. A phrase like this appears in Payne's play (Payne 52).

14 Again, Fletcher is likely relying on his diaries to quote this passage at the end of the play (Payne 53).

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On this occasion, owing to the great depth of the auditorium, many respectable citizens preferred the parterre or pit. Among these I saw my reverend teacher, Mr. Wilkie, rapt in attention and lost in thought.

In this building I have seen some of the leading players of the age. In August 1833, I saw Charles Kemble as Benedict, and his daughter Fanny as Beatrice, a piece of charmingly vivacious acting. On this occasion the former had something of an accident, which might have resulted in lameness. His foot passed through a stove-opening carelessly left open in the floor, and he limped in pain through the remainder of the play. In July 1836, Mrs. Ternan, formerly Fanny Jarman, appeared as Ernestine in the melodrama of *La Somnambula*,[15] (not the Opera). The house was crowded; and in the profound silence which prevailed during the sleep-walking scene, the sobs of the fairer part of the audience were distinctly audible. In August, a star of genteel comedy, Mr. Dowton, (old Dowton), played in the *School for Scandal*, with Mr. Ternan as Joseph Surface.[16] There also appeared Ellen Tree as Tan, Master Burke as Bombastes, and Clara Fisher as Helen in the Hunchback. All admirable artists. But perhaps the actor who impressed most forcibly was a Mr. Oxley, who played Othello in August of the following year (1837). In his wonderful personation of this character he seemed to invest it with a new charm. He rose to the full dignity of this matchless creation of Shakespeare, and carried his audience with him, by the magic of his art, in that sympathic [*sic*] awe and terror, which is of the very essence of Tragedy. Oh, the ecstasy, the anguish, the rapt attention, of that wondrous hour of enchantment! The highest poetry made a living actuality by the highest talent. Sixty years have now passed, but I have heard no syllable of Mr. Oxley since. Whither did he go? Where was his home? He was young then and gifted with every grace of form and gesture. Perhaps he was stricken down with pestilence. Perhaps, disappointed in some deep-seated hope, he died in early manhood: waning away sadly from life, as a star in the heavens, bright for a time, that fades and disappears to be seen no more.

During the months of June and July 1832, the Asiatic Cholera raged in Quebec.[17] It was the first appearance of this scourge, and the alarm was general.

15 There are many plays with this title. Fletcher's reference is uncertain.

16 Richard Brinsley Sheridan's (1751–1816) comedy of manners *The School for Scandal* (1777).

17 This was a pandemic, and Fletcher recounts his experiences in his "Memoranda of Events" (40).

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Several families, carried away by the prevailing panic, left town for the country. Quack medicines of all kinds were advertised. Benevolent societies were formed. Special services were held in the Churches. The guns of the grand battery were discharged, and pitch-boys sent up their dense clouds all round the *enceinte* of the fortifications. It was a terrible time of depression and anxiety. I shall never forget the sweltering heat of those summer nights, or the sickly moonlight that seemed to overlie, as an evil presence, the doomed and sickly city. The disease was thought to be contagious. I have seen Dr. Skey wash his hands carefully, after feeling the pulse of a cholera patient. Many carried a piece of camphor in the corner of a handkerchief as a prophylactic against possible infection. From morn till even, the solemn processions of the dead, buried in almost precipitate haste, passed through the silent streets: and from the churches there arose, from time to time, the sound of prayer, the wail of sorrow, the "*miserere*" of passionate entreaty. In the beginning of August, confidence began to return. The plague had spent its force. It had lasted only two months; but in those two months nearly two thousand victims had perished. This was about one in every fifteen, Quebec at that time having a population of thirty thousand, or about the same as Montreal.

There was a second appearance of cholera in 1834, during the summer months, but the mortality was not so great. I had the disease myself in the month of July. After the preliminary cramps, etc., I lay for a few days in a trance-like condition, and then rallied.

This visitation passed, the old town resumed its wonted life and activity. St. John Street, the favourite afternoon promenade, again swarmed with people. In the narrow thoroughfares of the Lower Town, the roll of business vehicles recommenced, and above, within the walls, the streets were alive with the animated converse of passing throngs, while, here and there, a military uniform gave colour and brightness to the scene. Among the notable Quebeckers of the time, I recollect Mr. Jeremiah Leaycraft, father of my old schoolmate, and a man of most kindly and genial disposition, who frequently passed our house on his way to town. He wore a high shirt collar, suggesting, in later days, a resemblance to the portraits of Gladstone. Then there was Dr. J. Charlton Fisher, at one time editor of the *N.Y. Albion*,[18] an eminent scholar and critic, faultless in attire, even to the canary-coloured kid gloves he was wont to wear; Archdeacon Mountain,

18 John Charleton Fisher (1794–1849) was also a journalist for the *Quebec Mercury* and was the first treasurer of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.

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afterwards Bishop, tall, dignified, yet most gracious in demeanour; Mr. Wm. Patton, broad of chest, and with "Atlantean shoulders,"[19] for several years president of the St. George's Society, and a most worthy representation of his native land—it was quite a picture to see him in the chair of the Society's dinner, with a huge baron of beef before him; Father McMahon, a worthy and well-known secular priest, always bright and pleasant; Mr. J. W. Woolsey, sometime president of the Quebec bank, brisk and active to the last, and dying in 1852 of extreme old age; Mr. Wm. Kemble, editor of the *Quebec Mercury*, stout and bulky, of high literary attainments, and related to the celebrated histrionic family of that time. Later on, the figures of Colonel Gugy and Stuart Derbyshire were conspicuous. The former was gazetted to a lieutenant-colonelcy in 1838. He was at that time a resident in Montreal, and subsequently moved to Quebec. Here he lived, for the most part, on his farm at Beauport, a few miles from the City. Having got into a dispute, as to boundaries, with his neighbour, a Mr. Brown, he invited me out, as a land surveyor, to investigate the grounds of contention. I recollect attending the Court of Enquetes as his witness, and on my entry into the Courtroom, was greeted by the colonel with a loud and audible "Now F,

'On God and on your lady call,
'And enter the enchanted hall!'"

After years of litigation, in which he was his own advocate, he gained his case, and remarked that "'twas as long as the siege of Troy." On another occasion, having failed to keep an appointment with me, he exclaimed, with a dramatic attitude, when we next met, "F.—have you forgiven me?" But all this light-hearted jocularity was a mere mask, assumed by a man of extreme urbanity and most polished converse. It was a pleasure to hear such exquisite English spoken with so rich intonation. Apart from his mother tongue, he spoke French, as was acknowledged, to perfection, and was familiar with the best Italian authors. Of temperate habits, he kept his health to the last. I saw him in the saddle a few weeks before his death: he was then over eighty, yet he bestrode his steed with all the ease and grace of an accomplished cavalier. At all times an excellent horseman, he shewed me, at Beauport, his stud of fourteen horses, any one of which, he said, would come at his call; and strongly reprobated anything like cruelty in the treatment of these intelligent animals. In emergencies, his prompt decision and energy were well known. Once, when riding through the streets of Montreal during the time of the rebellion, he came upon a gathering of the disaffected,

19 A reference to John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book ii, lines 305–7.

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who were being harangued by some furious demagogue. After listening for a few minutes, he seized the orator by the collar, and rode off with the culprit hanging at his saddlebow. At the affair of St. Eustache he was badly wounded by the rebels, who had taken refuge in the church—the last place, by the way, where one would expect to find them. In his law-suits—and he had several—he was now and then excited to volcanic bursts of emotion, and I have heard him make forcible allusion, in tones of thunder, to the "blood hounds of the law." He became a Member of the Legislature, and adjutant general of the militia. Yet with all his talents, his active disposition, and varied accomplishments, he seemed to the last, a disappointed man, seldom harmonizing with his fellows, standing somewhat apart from them, meeting adverse criticism with polished scorn. So, as time passed by, his declining years appeared to darken with a growing misanthropy and bitterness of soul, as if he inwardly resented the Nemesis of fate, and the unkindness of those with whom he was brought in contact.

Of a somewhat similar type, though of more convivial habits, was his contemporary, Stewart Derbyshire, a thorough man of the world, profoundly good-natured, of refined taste in art, an English gentleman of the old school, with a punctilious sense of honor, and its requirements. Something of a "gastronome," he delighted in seeing his friends about him at dinner and was wont to indulge in manifold "*sales et Gacetiae*." I recollect once, the conversation having turned on Burns' song: "Willie brewed," and the lines: "Wha first beside his chair shall fa, he shall be king of all us three," he turned upon me with the query, "and by what title would he be king?"—"Why, sir, why?"—I gave it up. "*Jure de vino*, of course."[20]

Of the rebellion of 1837, '38, I have not much to say.[21] The story has been told by others. Discontent had been for some time brewing, political grievances were said to exist, and the troubles were fanned into flame by unscrupulous demagogues. There was much destitution and misery in some of the lower districts. In the parish of Trois Pistoles alone, the Reverend Cur reported there were twelve hundred persons in a state of destitution. Indignation meetings were held at St. Ours, St. Laurent, Berthier, and elsewhere. Why these supposed wrongs should have led to an armed insurrection, it is hard to say; as all of them, or at least all that had any solid foundation, were removed by statute some years later, and would doubtless have been rectified at an earlier date, but for this

20 "Right of wine." The "Burns' song" is Robert Burns's poem "Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut."

21 Fletcher served briefly in the Rebellions of 1837–38.

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unfortunate outbreak. If rebellion be the last resort against unyielding tyranny, here, assuredly, there were no grounds of complaint at all commensurate with the extent and savage spirit of the rising. I may owe my neighbour a debt which is fairly due, but this would scarcely justify him in trying to burn my house down and take my life. The revolt in Canada had been long meditated. The notorious Ninety-two Resolutions passed the Quebec House in March 1834.[22] In November following, Louis Joseph Papineau was elected for the westward of Montreal, amid immense excitement.[23] I have conversed with those who saw him escorted to the polls by one of the hired bullies of his party, Montferrand, a man of huge bulk and stature.[24] His address to the Electors was characterized by the *London Morning Advertiser* as a "mighty mass of words, every line of which breathed assassination, rebellion and treason." I heard the great agitator speak in the House, some time afterwards—a man of fine presence, large-chested, with a clear, resonant voice, and great power of invective. Among the populace, the ill-feeling found vent in acts of violence. Stones were thrown at the barrack windows, and several soldiers of the 79th Regiment were badly beaten. The same troubles occurred in Montreal. In February 1835, the collector of customs at Quebec, Henry Jessup, having declined to transmit certain returns to the House—not feeling himself authorized to give them without the requisition of the governor—was imprisoned in the common jail, by warrant of the Speaker. While in durance, he was visited by most of the leading men in town. He was released a month afterwards, at the close of the session.

It is a relief to turn from these displays of civic rancour to the kindly interchange of good feeling between those of different creeds. At the close of 1835, a deputation of the Protestant inhabitants of the city waited on the Reverend Father McMahon, pastor of the newly-erected St Patrick's Church, with a donation of upwards of £200, raised among themselves, to be applied as to the purchase of an organ.[25] The Rev. Father, in terminating his reply said: "I shall

22 The 92 Resolutions were drafted by Louis-Joseph Papineau and Augustin-Norbert Mori as an expression of discontents and demands for redress by the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada and were sent to London without response.

23 Louis Joseph Papineau (1786–1871) was a politician, lawyer, and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada.

24 Jos "Montferrand" is the legendary French Canadian logger Joseph ("Jos") Montferrand.

25 Patrick McMahon (1796–1851) first celebrated mass in the church in July 1833 after it was built the prior year on what is now rue McMahon. It was demolished in 1988 after

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conclude with the assurance that while I deeply appreciate this most generous donation, I am free to declare that I set an infinitely higher value on the good will and friendship of the generous donors." The charity of this good priest was indeed very active. He was the main arbiter and adviser of the Irish immigrants, who were then beginning to arrive in large numbers.[26] I have many times seen him, on his doorsteps, giving audience to a crowd of applicants, encouraging some, censuring others, and with a word of good advice for everyone. The Church was opened on the memorial day of the patron Saint. I recollect that the services concluded with a vigorous singing of "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning," swelled by the accompaniment of the new organ.

About this time, the St. George's Society was formed and had its first anniversary dinner. Its meetings were held in Payne's Hotel, Palace Street, afterwards kept by the younger Hoffman. The first president was Mr. Wm. Price, who was succeeded, in 1837, by Mr. Patton. Both my father and myself occasionally attended these festive gatherings. I remember his singing "The Death of Wolfe" ("In a mouldering cave, where the wretched retreat") and later on, after the arrival of the Coldstream Guards, Captain Mundy created something of a sensation, by singing the well-known Anacreontic,—

"But d . . . their eyes, if ever they tries,
"To rob a poor man of his beer."[27]

Of a less pleasant nature were the public judicial punishments, which sometimes met the eye. In 1832, I saw, for the first and last time, in the marketplace in front of the church of "*Notre Dame des Victoires*," in the Lower Town, a man in the pillory. There was a large crowd. No missiles were thrown, but the scene was sufficiently grotesque and humiliating. More serious were the scenes attendant on carrying out the death sentence. The "Suitor" family, settlers in Megantic, were

it ceased being used in 1967. Fletcher's point is that the community had an ecumenical mutual aid among Protestants and Catholics.

26 Irish immigration to Canada increased due to British determinations of the Irish "surplus population," and the 1830s marked a shift from predominantly Protestant farmers from the north of Ireland to Catholic workers from the south and west (Campey 2018, 50).

27 Fletcher refers here, first, to Thomas Paine's poem "The Death of General Wolfe," later sung as a ballad, which was written to commemorate the British officer James Wolfe, the "Hero of Quebec." Wolfe earned the epithet for spearheading Britain's 1759 capture of Québec from the French. The two lines of verse that Fletcher goes on to quote (albeit with "damn" suitably abbreviated) derive from a common London street ballad recorded in many sources.

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tried in 1834 for murder, the outcome of some quarrels with their neighbours. Chief Justice Sewell, before whom the case was tried, remarked, in his charge to the jury, "that every accomplice was as guilty as though his finger were on the trigger." Some shockingly bad language on the part of the prisoners came out in the course of the evidence, and it seemed strange to hear the venerable judge, in his summing up, repeat all this with scrupulous accuracy. The defence of the elder Suitor, the father, was simply a rambling appeal for sympathy in view of the hardships of a settler's life. He and his two sons were found guilty, but the eldest son alone was executed. The sentence was carried out on the 4th of April. He held up well until the last moment, when his knees seemed to fail him. It was a pitiful sight. Develin, who was hanged two years afterwards, on the 8th April, also for murder, stood straight and immoveable as a rock, from beginning to end. But the saddest of all these painful scenes was the death of young Meehan, in 1864, who had killed some associate in a quarrel. I was passing by at the time and saw it from below John Street. It was a bright clear morning in the early Spring (22 March), and as the sun shone on the doomed man, I could see, though some distance away, the breath rising from his lips, in the calm, cool air. A priest stood by his side and offered the last consolations of religion. Then he spoke himself, and alluded, as we learnt afterwards, to his "doleful end." He was youthful and good-looking, and with a ruddy complexion and ingenuous countenance; and it seemed hard that the life of one who had scarcely entered on manhood should be thus abruptly closed by his fellowmen. When the priest left his side, poor Meehan collapsed utterly. He tottered, and his knees almost touched the scaffold. The Reverend Father, waving the executioner back, returned to him immediately, held him up, and sustained him; seeming to comfort and strengthen him with whispered words of encouragement. Leaving him then, Meehan met his fate calmly.

The disloyal feeling which, kept alive by the fostering care of their leaders, had smoldered so long throughout the length and breadth of the land, broke out into open revolt in 1837, after the closing of navigation. It was the year of the Accession, and much of the French Press teemed with the coarsest abuse of the youthful Sovereign. The well-affected part of the community took up arms. The aid of drill sergeants was invoked, and "awkward squads" were put through their facings. The portly and corpulent merchants of the Lower Town went through the mysteries of the "goose step," side by side with their juniors. The commercial clerks attended their offices for an hour in the morning, and afterwards went to drill. Ordinary business was suspended. The port being closed, munitions of war

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were rather scarce. The government armoury was ransacked for antiquated arms. The "Queen's pets," a body of merchant seamen, were supplied with horse-pistols of enormous size. Having myself to procure a sword on obtaining a commission in the Engineer Rifles, in February 1838, I had to content myself with a Dutch naval sword, not quite of regulation pattern. In Quebec, the services of the volunteers were mainly defensive, and confined to the city, although they offered to serve wherever wanted. On New Year's Day, the entire volunteer force, mustering some three thousand men, marched through Grande Allée, De Salaberry Street, and the St. Foy Road. They were also frequently called on to furnish picquets at various points, sometimes at the Parliament House, and occasionally at the Citadel, as the regiments of the line had been sent west. The winter was cold and stormy, but there was always abundance of volunteers for sentries, or any outside duty. On one occasion, after drill in the Cavalry shed, near the old Chateau, Captain Young informed us, that the weather being somewhat inclement, it was thought that the disaffected might possibly make a demonstration, and he invited all who were willing, to remain under arms all night. The entire company rushed forward with a ringing cheer. But the disaffected, in general, kept very quiet within the city, though there were isolated acts of violence. In November, Messrs. Caron, Lindsay and McCord were badly beaten on returning from a meeting of the Officers of the Volunteer Artillery, at the Albion Hotel, but there were no open displays, or ostentatious parades, such as those of the "Sons of Liberty," in the vicinity of Montreal. We heard of the great Rebel meeting at St. Charles, in October, where a column was erected, with an inscription, in honour of Papineau to which the young men marched in procession, laying their hands upon it, and swearing eternal fidelity to their country. This was rather an improvement on the youthful Hannibal of Carthage, swearing eternal enmity to Rome, as depicted in the great picture of Benjamin West. Some arrests were made in the city—among others Mr. Légaré, the artist,[28] and Mr. Chesseur, of the Museum, who were committed for sedition by that indefatigable magistrate, Robert Symes. They were afterwards brought before the chief justice, and by him admitted to bail. The city gates were now closed, every night, at eight o'clock, and were kept shut till gunfire in the morning, the wickets remaining open till later. The city banks, taking alarm, removed their specie to the Citadel. Many

28 Joseph Légaré (1795–1855). Fletcher and Légaré were friends, correspondents, and Fletcher had collected his works (Porter 1978).

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private individuals, my father among the number, had much of their furniture carted within the city walls.

Among those who appear to have been in town about this time, was Mr. T. S. Brown, afterwards "General Brown," of the insurgent army, who fled before Wetherall at St. Charles.[29] At least I found some of his books left for sale at Thomas Cary's bookstore. Among these was a copy of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and an illustrated edition of *Don Quixote*. He appears to have been a man of some education.

But the drama was now drawing rapidly to a close. In November, Colonel Gore was repulsed at St. Denis. The cruel murder of Lieutenant Weir, while a prisoner, followed. Colonel Wetherall was more fortunate at St. Charles. In December, General Colborne moved from Montreal on St. Eustache and St. Benoit, and was everywhere successful. All danger from the Rebellion appeared to be now at an end.

The year 1838 seemed to open on old Quebec under happier auspices. A large force of regulars was now in garrison. The great strain was over. In February, a Thanksgiving day was appointed by Proclamation for the "termination of the late Rebellion." In April, the eight companies of the Volunteer Light Infantry, and the Quebec Artillery, were disbanded.[30] The youthful Queen [Victoria], whose accession had been signalized [*sic*] by a Colonial insurrection, had now the satisfaction of seeing the clouds dispersed and quiet restored. That there was no outbreak in the city itself, before the arrival of the troops, was indubitably owing to the firm attitude maintained by the citizen-soldiers of the town, who volunteered on all sides. But to these loyal men, who gave up their time and convenience to the exigencies of the hour, there was awarded, either then or thereafter, no word of thanks, no faintest expression of gratitude, from the newly seated Queen or her advisers. From the sacred lips of Majesty there came no syllable of gratulation or approval to those who had so long held in Her name the walls of the ancient fortress and had successfully maintained Her authority

29 Thomas Storrow Brown (1803–1888) led the revolutionary forces at the Battle of Saint-Charles on 25 November 1837. The revolutionaires were defeated by the British forces under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel George Wetherall. Brown subsequently escaped to the United States. He was pardoned in 1844 and returned to Montréal, where he lived until his death.

30 The former unit, mobilized in 1837, was properly known as the Quebec Regiment of Volunteer Light Infantry. The Royal Quebec Volunteer Artillery was mobilized in 1837, using as its nucleus soldiers from the Quebec Artillery Company.

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at a very serious crisis. So far from this, the insurgents were indemnified for their losses, positions of power and profit were given to their leaders, and the prime agitator of the revolt was afterwards paid by the Home Government his salary in full as Speaker of the Quebec House, for the time elapsed from his flight, at the commencement of the rising, to that of his eventual re-emergence into public notice.[31] A weak and pitiful policy of conciliation; and one which, if we may judge from subsequent events, has utterly failed of its intended object.

Remarkable, too, is this cowardly treatment of the loyalists when contrasted with the honours heaped in after years on the Ontario militia, at the close of the half-breed Rebellion in the sparsely peopled solitudes of Manitoba and the North-West;[32] yet, this was but a "tempest in a teapot," compared with the large proportions of that organized disaffection which threatened the crowded districts and wealthy cities of the east. It has become the fashion, among the friends of the old insurrection, to speak of it as a mere political blunder, and of the Rebels themselves as "Patriots." These are the utterances of that covert disloyalty which thinks what it dare not act. The apotheosis of those, who would fain have "let slip the dogs of war,"[33] and brought widespread suffering on the land, seems scarcely conceivable. The Rebellion was more than a mistake, it was a crime. Even its encomiasts must admit that its recoil was injurious to themselves alone. It delayed all remedial legislation. It made the Special Council a necessity. It postponed for years the adjustment of all real or imaginary wrongs.[34]

In the month of June 1838, we had a squadron of warships at anchor in the harbour. Notable among these was the *Pique*, a heavily armed frigate of forty-six guns, with rounded stern; the *Inconstant*, of the same class; the *Andromache* of 28 guns; also the large line of battleships, of seventy-four guns; the *Hastings*, the *Malabar*, the *Hercules*, and the *Cornwallis*. Vice-Admiral Paget had his flag hoisted on the last of these. These were all wooden ships, of course, the era of iron had not yet dawned. They were all, the frigates especially, beautiful models; and one could not look without admiration on their tall masts and lofty spars. During the bright days of summer, boats, with visiting parties, were constantly putting off from shore, to be most hospitably received. Immense was the wonder

31 The "prime agitator" of the revolt was Louis-Joseph Papineau (1786–1871).

32 The Red River Rebellion of 1869, led by Louis Riel.

33 The dying words of Alexander the Great.

34 Fletcher's views are strongly against the revolutionaries in Lower Canada despite his support for French Canadians.

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excited by those formidable batteries on board—the Nordenfelt guns on deck, and the heavier cannon below.[35] The decks were smooth and spotless as the floor of a ballroom; the massive yardarms above, the vast spread of canvas, when the sails were occasionally shaken out, and the distinctive war pennants that streamed out aloft, all seemed fresh and fair as a vision, yet, in their strength and beauty, not unworthy of a power that claimed to be mistress of the seas.

It was on a September evening, in the same year, that I saw Lord Brougham burnt in effigy in the Place d'Armes, amid an immense multitude and much excitement.[36] His lordship's ill-natured censure of Lord Durham had aroused much unfavourable comment. The lay figure was a capital imitation of the original, wig and costume complete. Mr. Ford, a well-known citizen, administered a vigorous parting kick, as his lordship was committed to the flames.

The presence of the naval officers of the squadron gave, as may be imagined, an additional zest to the many social gatherings in the pleasant old town. "Country-parties," as they were termed, were organized in all directions. The jolly midshipmen were favourites everywhere, while the older officers were the subject of much careful angling on the part of the more sober-minded spinsters and their anxious mamas. Quebec, too, is fortunate in possessing, within a moderate circuit of environment, many delightful localities for an occasional visit. On the north side at a few leagues distance, is Lake St. Charles, a fine sheet of water—a double lake in fact, shaped like an hourglass—with Madame Verret's comfortable house of reception standing, at that time, at the narrows, and stretching away northward to the base of the Lauren tides. The sister lake, that of Beauport, lying more to the east: Indian Lorette, and the older village of the same name; all these, on the same side, had their full complement of visitors; while, on the south side of the St. Lawrence, the Chaudière Falls, the village of New Liverpool, and the heights of Point Levis, received, also, an ample share of patronage. It was no uncommon sight, on those midsummer mornings, to see a string of twenty or thirty old-fashioned *calêches* descending the Côte St. George's, on the north slope of the city, in search, like Dr. Syntax, of the

35 This seems unlikely, as the Nordenfelt multiple barrel organ gun, a forerunner of the Maxim machine gun, was only patented in 1873 and produced commercially after 1887 by the Nordenfelt Guns and Ammunition Company.

36 Henry Brougham, 1st Baron Brougham (1778–1868) denounced John George Lambton, 1st Earl of Durham (1792–1840) for his deportations following the Lower Canada Rebellion. Both were British politicians, and Fletcher's support for Durham against Brougham complicates his views on the Rebellion.

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picturesque. I like to think of those bright sunny days, with their accompaniments and surroundings, the magnificent scenery, the rich luxuriance of foliage, the many happy faces, the songs and laughter, and the mildly Bacchic character of the entire revelry. I remember, too, the splendid fishing to be had, in those years, along the valley of St. Charles. Mr. Richard Nettle, the inspector of fisheries, in the early fifties, has assured me that he had taken salmon at the Falls of Lorette, only a few miles from town; and many of the mountain-streams afforded excellent trout fishing. On one occasion, in company with Mr. Gilbert Griffin, a son of Dr. Griffin of the 32d,[37] I had a few days delighted fishing in the River Huron, a stream discharging into the Upper Lake St. Charles. We waded upstream from the lake for several miles, and the many turns of the river, among those mountain solitudes, seemed to bring a new landscape before us every few minutes. The unsophisticated trout of those regions, in their ignorance of man and his wiles, took the fly with eagerness, and rapidly filled our baskets. At night we slept in some old hunter's cabin and heard innumerable stories of stirring incidents and "hair-breath scapes."[38] It was a most pleasant excursion.

In those days, the exodus to salt water, during the hot months, was by no means universal. The means of travel were few, and not so convenient as now. The majority contented themselves with going to some of the surrounding villages, Ste. Foye, St. Ambroise, Charlesbourg, or Ancienne Lorette. With my old friend Jerry Leaycraft and his relatives I had many enjoyable jaunts of this kind to a house on the Ste. Foye Road, nearly opposite the church, where the family had engaged lodgings for the season. It was in 1835, I remember, that we both talked over the prospect of forming a Debating Club in the city, a project which, with the co-operation of Mr. Daniel Wilkie, a nephew of my old teacher, was forthwith carried into effect. We met in the Chien d'Or building, over Mr. Thomas Cary's, now the site of the post office. Among the members were Messrs. Colthurst, Dr. J. Graddon, C. C. Sheppard, McTaggart, Jno. McKirdy, Wm. Walker, junr., Jon. C. Olapham, Jackson, Thos. Cary (a nephew of the elder T. C.), Paul Lepper, Frank Colley, H. S. Scott, A. J. Maxharn, W. J. Welch, Wm. White, Colin Bruce, H. A. Wickstead, and, later, Frank D. Tims, and William. I

37 The 32nd (Cornwall) Regiment of Foot formed part of the garrison of the British protectorate of the Ionian Islands and Canada from 1817 to 1841 and were active in the Lower Canada Rebellion.

38 Likely a reference to *Othello*, Act I, scene i.

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was not with the Club in its latter days, having left for Kingston in 1841,[39] but it lasted, I believe, till late in the forties. I recollect that Halley's great comet, a magnificent spectacle, flamed in the north as we went to the place of meeting during the first winter.[40] Some of the members attained considerable fluency; and all must have profited by an occasional "reading up" of the subject for discussion.

This old Chien d'Or building, or Freemasons' Hall, was occupied by Thos. Cary & Co., proprietors of the *Quebec Mercury*, for thirty years, up to 1845. It was also a famous "locus standi" for auctioneers. G. D. Balzarette, Alexander Farquhar, and George Futvoye, held their sales here, on the lower flat. Here, also, several notables lectured, as the Rev. M. Wilkie, on hydrostatics, Dr. McCauley, on moral philosophy, Mr. Burke, on phrenology; and in November and December of 1835, a course of most interesting lectures on anatomy was given by Doctors James Douglas and Alfred Jackson. I enjoyed these evenings thoroughly, though the lectures themselves were of course mainly intended for medical students. There was much of dry humour about Dr. Douglas. In commenting on the fatty protuberances of the ischiatic region in the Hottentot, at the base of the pelvis, he remarked that some thought this was intended to enable the Hottentot to sit at his ease and admire the works of creation! To illustrate the peristaltic motion of the larger intestine, he actually had a cat caught and killed in the neighbourhood, while the lecture was going on. Poor puss was then, in a twinkling, duly dissected and presented to the audience, with an expression of regret for the "venerable spinster" who would see her tabby no more! In his remarks on the vascular system, he alluded to the many theories put forward to explain the use of the spleen and observed that some had thought it had no use at all! Had the worthy Doctor lived to the present day, he might possibly have expressed himself more definitely. Dr. Andrew Wilson, in *Harper's Magazine* for June 1896,[41] informs us that the leucocytes, or white blood-corpuscles, are produced in the spleen, and have an independent life, pushing their ways through the walls of capillary blood vessels and passing into the tissues, there to envelop and devour, like the amoeba, all alien matters that threaten the welfare of the body. Similar views, it is said, were entertained by Dr. Augustus Walker in 1846.[42]

39 Fletcher relocated for his work as a surveyor.

40 Halley's Comet was most visible on 16 November 1835. It is visible from Earth every 75–76 years.

41 Wilson, "The Battle of the Cells" (136–145).

42 Wilson, "The Battle of the Cells" (136).

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About this time, in view of possible trouble, the Constitutional Association was formed under the presidency of Andrew Stuart, a leading barrister. This was in Jan. 1836. The great National Societies also made their appearance. The first president of the St. George's Society was the Hon. Mr. Price, with Mr. William Patton as senior vice-president, and Robert Symes as treasurer. The three sister Associations marched together, for the first time, to St. Patrick's Church, on the 17th March, at the invitation of the sons of St. Patrick, a custom kept up for several years afterwards. These processions were of rather imposing character, the large silken banners and the regalia of the officers giving picturesqueness to the scene. The day was generally terminated by a dinner at the Albion Hotel, Palace Street.

But midst all the political stir and bustle of the time the interests of science and literature were not forgotten. The Literary and Historical Society, founded by Lord Dalhousie in 1834,[43] met in the Union Building, Place d'Armes. It was here that I heard Dr. James Sewell deliver his lecture on respiration. Mr. Valentine Daintry, a young man of remarkable talent, an official in the Post Office Department, gave a lecture on the undulatory theory of light, and another on the aurora borealis. Later, in 1841, they had removed to the Parliament Building, and in the early part of that year, having been elected a Member three years before, I had the pleasure of reading, though with fear and trembling, my first paper on the history of alchemy. Among the "grave and reverend Seigniors" who at that time held office, I recollect the Hon. A. W. Cochran, the Hon. Wm. Sheppard of Woodfield, Lieut. Baddely, Captain Bayfield, R.N., Dr. J. C. Fisher, Mr. A. Campbell, Queen's Notary, and the Rev. Dr. Wilkie. It required no little courage, in a comparative youngster, to face veterans like these. There were giants in those days. The fortunes of the Society, then in its prime, seem to have fluctuated with the flight of years. In 1851, ten years later, when I returned from Montreal, I found the "personnel" wholly changed. The meetings were then attended by Dr. Russell, Thulcke the artist, Samuel Sturton, Dr. E. A. Meredith, Lieuts. Savage, Noble, Rankin, and Ashe, H. S. Bingham, Mr. D. Wilkie of the High School, and Captain John McDougall, who had navigated the Steamer *Royal William* across the Atlantic. But I missed the kindly face of my old friend and teacher, the Rev. Dr. Wilkie, who had died in May of this year, shortly before my arrival. In his career as instructor, well-informed as he was in all the ordinary branches

43 The Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, of which Fletcher was a prominent member.

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of school-teaching, the bent of his mind was, I think, essentially mathematical. I remember his maintaining, at one of the Society's meetings, that the property of a man who owed a hundred pounds, and had nothing, might be algebraically expressed by —(minus) 100. Mr. Daintry demurred, holding that a new attribute or quality had been brought forward, and remarking "You would not, sir, speak of a well as being minus thirty feet high?" I was informed by his friends that he had retained his faculties almost to the last; his memory having alone failed, a premonition in most cases of approaching dissolution. Lovers of Eastern lore will recollect the exclamation of the dying Dasaratha in the Yajnadattabadha:

"My sight grows dark. My memory is disturbed."[44]

A fine touch of Nature. But despite this failing, I was told that there were some things he remembered to the last. Among these was the twenty-third Psalm, an especial favourite of his. Those dying lips, when all else was forgotten, were still heard to repeat the solemn words: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. . . . Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." Doubtless those fine old Psalms have been a comfort to many. Lord Sydenham,[45] who died at Kingston in 1841, begged a short time before his death, that the twenty-fifth Psalm might be read to him, and repeated several of the verses with affecting fervour. This was told me by the Rev. Dr. Adamson, who was with him at the time.

In 1853, the meetings of the Society were transferred for a time, from the Parliament Buildings to the City Hall. It was here that I heard, in the early months of that year, a paper by Dr. Meredith on Talfourd's *Tragedy of Ion*,[46] and one by Lieut. Savage on the Greek Drama. In February 1854, the Legislative Building was destroyed by fire, and with it perished the Museum of the Society, together with its records and great part of the library. The meetings were then held, for a brief period, over a store at the corner of St. Louis and St. Ursula Streets. Here

44 Fletcher refers here to a story, the "Yajnadattabadha" ("The Death of Yajnadatta"), embedded in the Sanskrit epic the *Ramayana*. King Dasaratha (the *s* is pronounced like *sh*) is the father of the epic's hero, Rama, and his three younger brothers. After Rama marries, Dasaratha's second wife, the mother of his younger brother Bharata, orders Rama and his bride, Sita, into exile, at which point Dasaratha effectively loses his eldest son and is stricken with grief. The story of Yajnadatta, set earlier in Dasaratha's life, is then told to account for this cruel loss. In it, Dasaratha accidentally kills Yajnadatta, the son of two blind ascetics, who then curse him to suffer a similar fate.

45 Charles Edward Poulett Thomson, the 1st Baron Syndham (1799–1841).

46 Thomas Talfourd's (1795–1854) *Ion* (1835) had a successful run in America.

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I heard a paper read by Lieut. Ranken, on fortifications. Bishop Mountain, who was present, remarked that he had "stumbled on a rather warlike subject." Lord Bury was also present. In 1861, I attended the meetings then held in an upper flat over B. Sinclair's bookstore, in St. John Street, where I heard a paper read by G. G. Dunlevie, on the Ionian Isles. In October 1862, the Society was again burnt out, and the library almost wholly destroyed. A removal was then effected to Freemasons' Hall, at the corner of St. Louis and Garden Streets; whence, in 1868, the last remove was made to the Morrin College building, on St. Stanislas Hill, the present "habitat" of the Association.[47] During all these years I had the pleasure of reading several papers at the stated meetings.

As respects music and the drama, I find it noted that Miss Hill, from London, a blind singer, arrived during the summer of 1838.[48] She took apartments on Mountain Hill, where I had the pleasure of hearing her sing, in magnificent style, "Rory O'More" and "The Four-leaved Shamrock." Her voice was singularly rich and powerful. The deprivation of sight never seemed to affect her unvarying cheerfulness, and, accompanied by her companion, a young lady who served as "her eyes," she visited the Falls of Montmorency and several points of interest in and about the city. She gave several concerts in Quebec and was universally respected. Subsequently in 1840 she took part in the musical service performed in Trinity Chapel on St. George's day, declining, "as an English-woman," to receive any remuneration. The Seguins gave their first concert, assisted by Mr. Latham, in September 1839. They gave another concert in August 1840, which I attended. It was a rich treat to hear them give the famous duo, "Sir, a Secret," "We're a' Noddin," and the "Laughing Trio." They were assisted on this occasion by Mr. Horncastle. I heard them a few years afterwards, in Montreal, at the Hayes Theatre, in *Norma*, the *Bohemian Girl*, and the *Barber of Seville*.[49] La Borghese, an Italian lady, sang at the Albion Hotel; as did also, at a later date, the veteran

47 Morrin College was established in 1862, following a generous bequest from Joseph Morrin, one of Fletcher's former classmates at the Reverend Wilkie's school. In 1868, the college became home to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, which remained in the building after the college folded early in the twentieth century. The building survives as the Morrin Centre, which is now administered by society, which is itself still active.

48 Miss Hill toured the United States and Canada, also performing Handel's *Messiah* in New York on 4 June 1938 to strong reviews recorded in the *Boston Musical Gazette*.

49 Three operas: Vincenzo Bellini's *Norma*, Michael William Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl*, and Gioachino Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

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Braham, of worldwide celebrity.[50] I heard him at the last concert which he gave in Quebec, in August 1841. He was advanced in years but seemed to retain all his vocal powers. "Age could not wither him"—he wore a wig but shewed no other sign of old age. In singing the "Bay of Biscay," his dramatic acting, and the powerful resonance of his voice in giving "A sail, a sail!" added much to the effect. I recollect the rich sweetness of his "Farewell my Trim-built Wherry," the last stanza of which was subdued almost to a whisper; yet the expression and vocalization were perfect. While singing "A Man's a Man for a' that," he, as well as the audience, was surprised by a rather unusual incident, the close of the first stanza being greeted by a burst of applause from the adjoining passage and corridors, where the assembled servitors of the hotel expressed, in this way, their approval of the sentiment. But I must not omit mention of celebrated Rainer family of Tyrolese, who gave their first concert, also at the Albion, in July 1840, appearing in their national costume. I did not see them on this occasion; but during their stay they were incited to sing at Morton Lodge, on the Ste. Foye Road, the residence of Mr. T. A. Stayner. On their return to town, they passed slowly by our residence, "York Cottage," near the tollgate. It was a beautiful summer evening, they were seated in an open carriage, and singing one of their national songs. We all of us listened, "Lapped in Elysium," to those delicious harmonies, that seemed like the Song of Silenus greeting the departing day. There was one voice, a baritone, of exquisite sweetness and power. None could hear, unmoved, so entrancing a melody. The deep repose around seemed to add to the charm. It was a delightful episode, never to be forgotten.

Many have been the changes, since then, in that neighbourhood. The famous fifty-acre field then extended as an unbroken pasturage from the Ste. Foye Road to the Grande Allée, and thither the cattle of the Ursuline Nuns were driven, every morning, to graze. There were a few small marshes in it. Our neighbour, James Lane, shot over this ground, and occasionally a few snipe were bagged. In the centre of the field was a small green thicket, almost impervious, in which some of the large white horned owls were wont to lodge at times. I killed a very fine one, to be stuffed, which stood over two feet in height. I have heard of people having lost their way, during the heavy mists of autumn, in this extensive tract. It is now in great part built over, and laid out into streets, Maple Avenue passing centrally through it. Facing this field, on the north side of the Ste. Foye, was another vacant tract, extending northward to the brow of the hill separating

50 John Braham (1774–1856) was an English tenor and very successful opera singer.

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the town from St. Roch's. In this tract I have played cricket in my schooldays; and in the late "twenties" I have seen two or three large grey eagles flying over the summit of the hillslope to the north. Here too, Ste. Foye Road is now lined, on both sides, with dwelling houses. On these fields, and in their vicinity, there was usually, in those years, a great turn out of amateur sportsmen when the enormous flocks of wild pigeons took their annual summer flight over Quebec and its neighbourhood. These birds flew high and in immense masses, like lofty moving clouds. Everyone, young and old, who could handle a gun, seemed to be there; though from the elevated flight of these migratory visitors, it was not easy to do much execution. It was a wonderful sight to see these birds pass, in serried ranks and squares, for hours together, over a running fire of sportsmen below. But in after years, frightened perhaps by the warmth of their reception, they flew more inland.

Opposite the fifty-acre field, on the Grande Allée, was the well-known race-course, which for many years, conjointly with the regatta in the harbour, attracted a multitude of visitors, during the summer holidays. Crowds of carriages lined the course, and the proceedings were enlivened by the inspiriting "calls" of the military buglers, who were generally on hand. The great race between Timoleon and Filho, in 1833, won by the latter, created immense enthusiasm. Here also, on the Plains of Abraham, the grand reviews took place. It was a splendid sight to see three or four of the crack regiments of the line manoeuvring or marching past. In those days, the pioneers, stalwart men, with axes and leather jerkins, marched in the van; a fugleman gave the time and emphasized the word of command. The light companies wore kneecaps, and the rank and file, generally, appeared in pants of spotless white. Rifles were not then in vogue, but during the thirties, I was told, were served out, in limited quantities, to the non-commissioned officers. I may mention here that rifles were in use during the West India campaign of 1805–1810. They were muzzle-loaders, of course, and the ball was driven home by a wooden mallet. The regattas also formed part of the holiday curriculum. The Guards, on their arrival, took part in them; and I was witness to a well contested race which they won from the Quebec Rowing Club, among whose members were A. J. Maxham, James and George Gillespie and John Gordon, Mr. James George, a well-known Quebec merchant, appeared on this occasion, navigating with a double-headed paddle, an Esquimaux Caiac, a canoe of skins, and closed round the waist.

On high-days and holidays, the brow of these plains, overlooking the St. Lawrence, was always a favourite promenade. During the summer the harbour

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was generally crowded with shipping; and it was pleasant to hear the rhythmic songs of the crews, softened by distance, while engaged in loading or discharging their various cargoes. At the present day, the savage exclusiveness of the modern ship-labourers union, with their murderous proclivities, has put an end to all this. Songs and shipping seem to have departed together; dull times have come; and the glory of the great trading-port is a thing of the past!

The Grande Allée, being the highway leading from Quebec to Cap-Rouge, is known, outside the city limits, as the Cap-Rouge Road. Halfway between these two places, on the south side or the Road, stood the building known as "Hamel's," a long, low, wooden structure, in much request as a rendezvous for picnics and winter country parties. These last generally consisted of twenty or thirty couples driving from town in carioles; and, with fine weather and good roads, the drive there and back, on a clear starlit night, was wont to be one of the chief attractions of the gathering. The rooms were delightfully large and pleasant and the dressing rooms neat and tidy. Dancing was kept up till midnight to the music of violinists from the city—Sauvageau or Hunt—and an excellent supper of substantials was then in order, an episode highly relished by the seniors. I have met many of the "*jeunesse dorée*" of the town—mostly merchant's clerks and young lawyers—at these parties which were most enjoyable. All seemed pleased, and there was a general absence of ceremony. During the Winter of 1838–39, several officers of the Guards, then in garrison, were present.

The other main highway, leading to the city, was the St. Foye Road, a very ancient and quaint-looking thoroughfare, especially that part within the banlieu, or town-limits. The houses were mostly small and of wood. Many had covered galleries in front. About halfway to town there stood on the south side, on the roof of one of these buildings, an enormous wooden figure of Jupiter grasping his thunderbolts, the work of some native artist. Nearly opposite was a small tenement with a mineral spring of deliciously cool saline water. It was pleasant, in the hot summer weather, to quaff a glass of this icy and refreshing drink. Many citizens patronised this establishment. I have several times met Dr. James Sewell there. This was in the early "thirties." West of this, and a little back from the road, stood a large building, a hospital, I believe, with a sundial in front, surmounted by the inscription, "Dies nostra sicut umbra."[51] It has long since disappeared. Its position was somewhere in the rear of the present St. John's Church. There was a

51 Lines taken from Psalm 102 (101): 12: "Our days are like the shadow." The New Vulgate, however, presents the line in the singular, "Dies mei sicut…[My days….]."

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long space of open ground about it, separated from the road by a low fence. The Ste. Foye Road, within the limits, was here known as St. John Street "without," being a continuation of the city-street of that name and limning through the populous suburb of St. John. The doors and windows of these dwellings were generally open in summer; the tenants seemed content to enjoy the "*dolce far niente* [Sweet little sounds]"; the frequent sounds of a violin floated outwards, mingled with the laughter of many tongues. Life, to these "insouciants," seemed a carnival of perpetual sunshine. Here and there, some dark-eyed brunette looked out at the window, anxious to see and be seen; while the old men, the elders of the people, with white hair and venerable aspect, played draughts on the open balconies, or clustered in cheerful converse; as in the *Maccabees*—"The aged men sat in the streets communing together of good things."[52] Some of these latter, of large and stately build, might have served as models of Olympian Jove. Nor were the loom and spindle wanting.

The small rooms within, judging from an occasional glimpse, seemed the perfection of neatness, with their quaint old furniture and pictures of Saints on the walls. Alas, that this should come to an end! But Father Time is remorseless. All this was swept away, at one fell swoop, by the great fire of June 28, 1845, which destroyed thirteen hundred houses. After a time the old buildings were replaced by more solid structures. Shops and stores of considerable pretensions appeared. The street became lined with modern tenements of two and three stories. An air of importance pervaded the entire locality. But the charm of those quaint old houses, as they stood of yore, with all their songs and merriment and light-hearted gaiety, has passed away forever.

One of the most remarkable of the many fires from which Quebec has suffered, was that of the Chateau St. Louis, which was burnt in midwinter—on the 23rd January 1834. The day was clear and fine, but intensely cold, the thermometer marking eleven or twelve degrees below zero. The fire commenced at about nine in the morning, and lasted all day, burning downwards from the upper story. An immense crowd was collected on the spacious Place d'Armes, but nothing could be done. Heated water was obtained but froze in the hosepipes. By sunset the entire building was a ruin, and nothing but blackened walls remained of the famous old Chateau, the scene of so many festivities in the days of old. Not a vestige of the historic relic is now to be seen, its site being covered by the Durham platform. Within a stone's throw of the Chateau, to the northwest, formerly

52 1 Maccabees 14.9.

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stood an unpretending structure, used in 1837 as a drill shed, and afterwards as a Theatre. It was destroyed by fire in the summer of 1846, while crowded to witness a scenic representation, with the loss of forty-six lives. The large building in the vicinity, fronting on the Place d'Armes, and now the Normal School, was used for Government offices in the early fifties. In these I have frequently seen some of the notables who figured largely in the old-time insurrection—Dr. Rolph, A. N. Morin, W. L. Mackenzie, and others.[53] The two first-named were successively, in the order given, commissioners of Crown Lands.

In the following year (1835), I met young Hemans, a son of the poetess, at one of the Quebec entertainments. It was at an evening reception given at the residence of Mrs. James Hunt, in the Lower Town. He was at that time a student at Bowdoin College, Massachusetts, and had been invited to Quebec, during the vacation, by William Morrin, a fellow student, and son of Dr. Joseph Morrin, for many years a well-known medical practitioner of the city.[54] Young Hemans was of somewhat delicate appearance, thin and slightly built, rather undersized, of calm and thoughtful aspect, quiet and reserved in manner.

In 1840, the celebrated traveller and journalist, James Silk Buckingham, gave lectures on Egypt and Palestine, in the Court House and Theatre Royal—a man of dignified presence, as well as an accomplished and pleasing speaker.[55] In his lecture on Palestine he remarked that our knowledge of the age of trees was yet in its infancy, and that it was possible that many of the trees were yet living under whose shadow the Saviour had rested during his wanderings. In referring to the appearance of an Oriental crowd, he observed that it possessed a pictorial charm, from the gay colours and flowing outlines of the varied costumes, whereas, in the

53 John Rolph (1793–1870) was an English-born and educated physician and politician in Upper Canada who critiqued the legislative processes used to avoid engaging with those who later led the rebellions of 1837 and 1838. Augustin-Norbert Morin (1803–1865) was a judge and politician in Lower Canada and drafted the 92 Resolutions in 1834 that led to the rebellions. William Lyon Mackenzie (1795–1861) led the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion. In 1834, the year about which Fletcher is writing, Mackenzie defeated Rolph to become mayor of the newly incorporated Toronto.

54 Bowdoin College is in Brunswick, Maine, and has been since 1820, when Maine became a state. However, when the college was founded in 1794, Maine was still part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and Fletcher must have been unaware that the college was actually now in Maine.

55 Buckingham (1786–1855) was a well-known travel writer best known for his writings and lectures about the Middle East and India.

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West there was a monotonous uniformity of dark-colour stiff attire, and the hats worn scarcely differed a quarter of an inch in brim, from one another. He spoke in an easy, conversational manner, apparently without notes, and extempore.

Two years afterwards, in 1842, Quebec was visited by another celebrity of worldwide renown, Charles Dickens, the novelist.[56] I had seen him, previously, at Kingston, where he lodged at J. H. Daly's Hotel. On leaving that place for Montreal, he came down, in the early morning, to the wharf where the steamer lay, and shook hands with several who were introduced to him. A considerable crowd was collected to witness his departure; and on going on board he was considerate enough to stand on the hurricane deck, where he remained for some time, conversing with the Captain so that all might have a good look at him. It was said that, while at the hotel, several young men of the town donned a waiter's garb, in order to see him, a moment, while taking his ease. He was accompanied by his wife, a youthful blonde, rather stout, with blue eyes, and of unpretending and charming manner.[57]

In later days, 1863, on the occasion of Bishop Williams' Consecration,[58] another visitor came, of sterling personality, John Strachan,[59] Bishop of Toronto. It was with profound respect that I saw the aged prelate, then over eighty, moving with his brother-bishops slowly up the nave, somewhat feebly, and with his well-known rolling gait, but erect and defiant as ever. In the conflict of clamour which led to the iniquitous spoliation of the Clergy-Reserves, he stood forth as the unwavering champion of his church and her rights. He crossed the Atlantic; he left no stone unturned; he pleaded his cause, by petition and memorial, before the Imperial Commons, and before the Legislature of Canada. He stood in the breach, one man against many, consecrating with unwearied energy all his great mental talent and bodily activity to the defence of his sacred palladium. It was all in vain. Yet may we not say that the results of this legislation have been

56 Charles Dickens (1812–1870) toured America and Canada in 1842. He left Kingston on 10 May of that year. He arrived in Montréal on 11 May, staying in that city for two weeks before returning to America. During this period, he made an overnight journey to Québec, recounted in chapter 15 of his *American Notes* (1842).

57 Catherine Dickens, née Hogarth (1815–1879).

58 James William Williams (1825–1892) replaced George Jehoshaphat Mountain (1789–1863) as the Anglican Bishop of Quebec in 1863.

59 John Strachan (1778–1867) was a founder of King's College, which became the University of Toronto.

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altogether unfortunate? Like the poisoned shirt of Nessus,[60] it has deadened the morality of the body politic; it has debased and darkened the sense of justice and equity; it has substituted expediency for right in the conduct of public affairs. To the status of the Anglican clergy it has been most injurious; inviting them to descend from the true to the acceptable, and inciting every pudding-headed parishioner to carp and cavil at his spiritual teacher.

At the time of Charles Dickens' visit, the travel between Quebec and Montreal was carried on by steamboat in summer and by stage in winter, the Grand Trunk Railway not being opened till some twelve years later. The traverse from Quebec to Levis, in the "thirties" and early "forties" was effected by a horse-boat which was often driven by stress of tide or weather, some miles down the river. In winter it was performed by canoes, a voyage which required considerable skill and judgment, to avoid the floating blocks and fields of ice. I have often, during the transit, admired the wonderful dexterity of the canoe-men, in avoiding danger, and finding an open channel. It was sometimes necessary for all hands to jump out, to allow the canoe to be dragged over the icefield, and again launched in open water. I recollect on one occasion, when all had jumped out, some unfortunate passenger was found to have been left behind on the ice, when the canoe was again moving forward in the open channel. He was an Old man, and we could see that he had fallen on his knees, in prayer, thinking, no doubt, that his last hour had come. We had some difficulty in getting the crew to go back for him, which they did with a seeming show of reluctance and some irreverent laughter, one of them remarking rather drily: "*Qu'est-ce que* ça *fait? Il ne vivra pas longtemps, quand meme!*"[61]

When I again visited Quebec, in 1864, after an absence of some years, I found that this primitive style of ferry had been given up, and that a stout little steamer was now employed on the traverse, prepared to do battle to all the inconveniences of winter, and able to cross at all times, save in exceptionally cold or stormy weather. From the removal of the seat of Government to Kingston, and thence to Montreal (where it should always have remained), I found the Legislative Building then occupied as a City Exchange, with Mr. Rodgers in charge. This gentleman was the author of a projected history of Canada, which, however, was discontinued after the first volume. I met there, among others, an old acquaintance and schoolfellow, Daniel Wilkie, a nephew of my former

60 In Greek mythology, the poisoned shirt that killed Heracles.

61 "What does it matter? He won't live long anyways!"

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preceptor, and at that time one of the professors of the High School, established a few years previously. I also met Mr. Kimlin, editor of the *Quebec Mercury*, who had succeeded Mr. W. Kemble in that capacity.[62] In driving round some of the old haunts, I was struck by the scene of desolation which the St. John suburb presented. This was the year following the great fire, and the acres upon acres of solitary chimneys, looking like monumental tombstones, had a most dreary appearance, the work of reconstruction having scarcely commenced.

The perambulatory system of Government having been adopted in consequence of the burning of the Parliament House in Montreal, by a Griffin-town mob, in 1849, the Legislature and public offices were brought down to Quebec in 1851. A few years afterwards, a very notable Ecclesiastic visited the town, His Eminence the Cardinal Bedini.[63] A rather amusing incident occurred at a levée which he gave. Several of the clerks of the Legislature attended and were presented. These were announced by their official titles, "*Premier* écrivain *de la Chambre*," "*troisième* écrivain," and so on, through half a dozen presentations. Whereupon His Eminence remarked, in a clear and audible voice, but with a humorous twinkle in his eye, "*Mais, ce sont des personnages très distingués*."[64]

Sixty years ago, when the era of ocean-steamers had scarce commenced, and ocean-cables were not, it was considered a fair average if British advices reached Quebec in a month's time. Contemporary literature came to us, in great part, through the medium of cheap and unsightly American reprints; or, if in the form of novels, was largely supplied by such papers as the *New York Albion*, for some time edited by Dr. J. O. Fisher. In this paper appeared, in consecutive numbers, Captain Marryat's *Jacob Faithful* and *Peter Simple*, Michael Scott's *Tom Cringle's Log*, and *Cruise of the Midge*, Warren's *Diary of a late Physician*, and others. The selection was always good, and the paper well printed. It was supplied to the citizens by Mr. Tardif, of the Court House staff. The *Quebec Star*, in the early thirties, was edited by Rev. D. Wilkie. It bore the legend, "*Coelum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt*"[65]; and occasionally, not often, diverged into fic-

62 William Kemble (1781–1845) edited the *Quebec Mercury*, in which Fletcher published, until 1842, at which point he was succeeded by Dr. William Kimlin.

63 Gaetano Bedini (1806–1864) visited the United States in 1853 and then more quietly came to Canada after the anti-Catholic Cincinnati riot of 1853.

64 French: "First clerk," "Third clerk," and "But, they are very distinguished characters."

65 Horace, Epistle XI, line 27, Book I, "They change their sky, not their soul, who rush across the sea." "Coelum" is a variant spelling of "caelum" that became common in medieval

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tion. An episode from one of Warren's stories was given at full length—that of the duel between Captain and Mr. Trevor—in the *Diary*. In 1837, appeared an attractive paper, the *Literary Transcript*, edited by a lady of taste and talent, Mrs. Kershaw, assisted by her brother, Mr. T. Donoghue. It was pleasant to hear these kindly Sibylline utterances amid the din of political conflict. But the paper did not live long. The editress returned to Europe in 1839. It was continued for a few years, as the *Transcript*, by Mr. Burke, and later by Mr. Willis, a brother of the noted littérateur. I believe that Mrs. Kershaw was cousin to Lady Boss, wife of Sir John, the Arctic voyager. She was also a relative of Rymer Jones, the naturalist. Apart from newspaper reading, there was also the bookstore of Mr. Thomas Cary, at the Chien d'Or, and that of Mr. Neilson, at the salient angle of Mountain Hill.

During the long winters, commercial business in the Lower Town was almost at a standstill. The leading merchants, with their employees, devoted themselves, for several months, to social enjoyment. Sleigh-driving was a favourite amusement. A tandem club was in existence, with a magnificent show of skins and robes. Evening parties, for juniors, were of daily occurrence, and whilst playing for the seniors, assumed large proportions. The ordinary gatherings, for young people, were of very primitive character; the guests met at seven, danced till ten, and departed after a light supper. Snowshoeing was always popular, and so was sliding in small sleighs down the declivities of the town. Many a time, when at school, have I enjoyed this latter sport down Haldimand Street, with D. A. Ross, afterwards a minister of the local government. Occasionally, too, the broad St. Lawrence "took," or became frozen, as a level flat, from side to side. Roads were then marked out, and quite a gay scene was presented, what with carioles crossing, bells jingling, huts and *cabanes* with flags flying, groups of people everywhere, and skating parties on the spaces of clear ice. The ice bridge afforded, besides, an easy means of communication with Point Lévis, and the farmers of the south side brought over their produce. On one occasion, to secure a bridge, a Captain LeBreton was permitted to connect large floating pieces of ice by strong chains of iron. But the chains snapped like threads. Afterwards, when the ferry steamers traversed, the point of view changed, and the attempt was once made to break the ice, and prevent a bridge, by the explosion of dynamite, but equally without success. The snowshoe club, besides occasional races in the vicinity of the town, were wont to cross the Beauport ice, and rendezvous at the Falls of

Latin. This may reflect Fletcher's seminary education.

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Montmorency. The "Falls" was always a favourite resort both for the drive, and for the delightful sliding down the steep "cone," where the rush of wind, from the tremendous velocity attained, almost took one's breath away. There was some danger, from the clefts and air-holes in the ice, and I recollect that Mr. Joseph Leaycraft, a son of the West India merchant, had an unpleasant experience of this kind. He stumbled into one of these apertures, but fortunately checked his descent before reaching the water, and was eventually drawn up by ropes.

The various elements of the Quebec community lived together at that time, so far as any difference of creed was concerned, in perfect peace and harmony. Religious disputes were scarcely heard of. The Roman Catholic secular clergy were then actuated, as I think, by milder and less exclusive sentiments than in later years. While at the Quebec Seminary, in 1832, I was treated with kindness and consideration. The Rev. Father McMahon was, himself, a man of active and genial liberality. It was not till after his death that the Gavazzi riot occurred.[66] I saw Father Gavazzi at the Wesleyan Church on Jail Hill, a few days before the outbreak. It was a fine summer evening; the Church windows were open, and as I passed by, I could see his face and figure distinctly as he addressed the meeting from the pulpit—a man of stalwart build, with large, expanded chest, and powerful voice. The riot itself occurred at Zion Church, in Ste. Ursule Street, during an evening service. It had been thought that, there being no public display, a denominational church would be safe from interference. But it was not so, his discourse was interrupted by the words "that's a lie," and then "the row began." There was a rush towards the pulpit, the reverend lecturer seized a chair, and being a man of muscle, the ruffians who attacked him got rather more than they bargained for. As they swarmed up the pulpit stairs they were knocked right and left like flies, and Gavazzi, aided by his friends, managed to escape without a scratch. The only similar instance of intolerance that I remember was a demonstration against Chiniquy,[67] several years later. Both these men were converts from Romanism. I was playing chess in the club rooms, in John Street, at the time, when, a little after eight o'clock, "a roar like thunder shook the street," and we rushed to the windows to see the cause of the tumult. A raging

66 Alessandro Gavazzi (1809–1889) gave lectures causing anti-Catholic riots in 1853.

67 Charles Chiniquy (1809–1899) was curé of La Nativité-de-Notre-Dame in Beauport, a prominent parish, and led a widely popular temperance movement. After being excommunicated, he became a Presbyterian minister. His memoirs, sermons, and public performances were widely sought.

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mob filled the thoroughfare, and the air was heavy with angry denunciation. We could make out that they were waiting for Chiniquy, who had been lecturing at a small church outside John's gate and was expected to pass that way. But the reverend Father was not so easily entrapped. Having an inkling, no doubt, of the intended reception, he went off by another road, and the mob withdrew, after a time, profoundly disgusted and disappointed.

Yet I would fain hope that in any great calamity this violent spirit was merged in a better and more kindly feeling. When the great fall of rock from Cape Diamond occurred, in 1841, all worked side by side, and strong men trembled with excitement and sympathy, as the cries of the victims rose from the ruined houses. The Imperial Custom House was just opposite, and thither were taken a number of children who had been rescued from the timbers of the crushed tenements. Most of these were in their cradles, and it was strange to see these infants, unconscious of the casualty which had made them orphans, contentedly enjoying the sweetmeats which the officials had provided to keep them quiet. So also in the great fire of 1870, which consumed over four hundred houses in St. Rochs, and which I have special reason to remember, as my youngest daughter, then an infant, was with her foster-mother in the middle of the burnt district. I could not get down in time, and she was twice removed before finding a place of safety.

Still more destructive was the conflagration which eleven years later swept the St. John's suburb from east to west, commencing nearly opposite St. Matthew's Church and extending westward as far as the Tower Field. More than six hundred houses were destroyed, chiefly on D'Aiguillon and St. John Streets, and of the great church of St. John there remained nothing but the outer walls. This fire came within no great distance of my own residence, and, as the evening advanced, it was like a scene from Dante to see the darkness lit up by half a mile of flame. The church was near the foot of our street, and we could hear the bells being tolled from the lofty towers, as if in supplication, a solemn and mournful expression of deprecatory prayer. Still the fire advanced, and at length we could see the tall spires collapse and fall into the flames, amid an audible and universal groan. One toppled over sideways, and then the other one went plumb down, disappearing as if by magic. Most of the Church fittings were saved. On the following morning I was walking towards the ruins when I was startled by finding myself in the company of the twelve Apostles. There they were, huge wooden figures, of more than life size, taken from the interior, and placed for safety in a vacant green space near Number Three tower.

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But I must not extend my reminiscences to recent times. Here let me terminate these rambling notes. It has been a pleasure to recall those old days, when the famous garrison town was yet in its glory, when the veteran troops of the Empire held its walls, and a thriving commercial population gave life and animation to its streets. In long after years—in 1892—I revisited Quebec, but alas! all seemed changed. The streets were comparatively dull and deserted; an air of sadness seem to oppress the community; trade was stagnating; the grand old merchant princes had died and passed away, leaving none to succeed them. The splendour of the old city, with its many-voiced life and varying kaleidoscopic hues, had departed. All was strange and depressing. Only the beauty of its environs remained. Therefore it is that turning from its present aspect, and from the sealed book of the future, I prefer to look back on that which has been, and to retrace, from memory, a few idle jottings of the past.

E.T.F.
New Westminster, B.C.
26 September 1896

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Early Poetry

Olla Podrida

1838

Our words are like the waves,
Brawling most idly o'er the silent depths
Of that which lies immutable below.

Oh solemn Night!
Methinks thou art the shadow of our God
Bending above us with a father's care.

Our life is naked garden-ground, wherein
Are germs of many plants: some nurture one
And some another. But there is a plant
Which few have tended; 'tis a lowly flower,
But full on incense, and its name is LOVE.
—So true it is that all other noblest joys,
Friendship, ambition, useful energy,
Kindred affection, and true patriotism,
Are leaves and blossoms of this humble plant.

Thinking of absent friends,
The memory of their weaknesses is gone,
Their virtues only do we think upon.
—So barren mountains, at a distance seem,
Lose all their bleakness and rigidity,
And wear an aspect soft and beautiful.

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We were commanded by the incarnate Word
To call Him Father. Merciful is He
In thus allowing what our nature asks.
We shrink in awe from God the terrible,
Whose breath is lightning, and whose ways are dark,
But cling confidingly to God the sire.
—The traveller, fatigued and weather-worn,
Seeks for a resting place, no lofty crag
Whose summit hands between the clouds and stars,
A smooth moss-stone is better far.

Bigotry—
It is the moon of torrid climes, which blasts
And makes corrupt whate'er it shines upon.

The freshness of our first affections has
One steady cynosure. In after life
With many we divide the poor remains
But bitter is the rending of that first
And strongest tie, it rives the very soul!
Torn from its anchor, o'er the waste of life
Our bark is driven, hopeless, rudderless,
Until experience hath taught us how
To find another anchorage.

Half our lives
We hoard false knowledge, and the other half
Unlearn our hard-won lessons, and root out
The produce of our macerating toil.
'Tis ill to learn too early. Some there be
Grow old before their time, and waste their youth
In bookish study. Fools! that wear away
A jewel, which can never be replaced,
In vain attempts to lift old Isis' veil.

Shame, slander, misconstruction, infamy,
Things which we tremble at, what are they but

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The shadows of our actions? —shadows which
Are small or large, according as the sun
Of our prosperity is high or low.[1]

E.T.F.

1 Fletcher takes his title from the Spanish stew known as *olla podrida* (lit. "rotten pot"), which is generally made with chickpeas or beans, combined with various meats and vegetables—presumably whatever happened to be at hand. Fletcher uses the term to mean a decay, as the change of subjects from the sacred to the debased in the poem indicates.

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Legend of the Isiamagomi

1838

The Isiamagomi, or Long Lake, is in the Country of the Saguenay. The rock mentioned in the tradition is still a conspicuous object.[1]

> He that is weary of the din and toil
> Of towns and commerce, let him go abroad
> And ramble through the wilderness awhile,
> And ease his spirits of their anxious load.
> Let his dulled eye behold the amber sod,
> The leaf-strewn brook, the still, secluded lake,
> Skirted with wild white roses, where hath trod

1 "Long Lake" could be a reference to present-day Lac Kénogami, the name of which derives from a Montagnais word that means "long lake." It is situated roughly 150 kilometres upstream along the Saguenay River and slightly to its south, some 20 kilometres west of the Baie des Ha! Ha! The name "Isiamagomi" seems unattested elsewhere, and I have been unable to determine its origins (other than in Fletcher's imagination). As noted earlier, however (57n31), in "Notes of a Journey Through the Interior of the Saguenay Country," Fletcher quotes from the journal of Joseph Bouchette Jr., one of the leaders of an expedition into the Saguenay region in 1827–28. Writing of the area around the Baie des Ha! Ha!, Bouchette refers to a "Lake Tsiamogomi" (also spelled "Tsiamagomi")—a name strikingly similar to "Isiamagomi." Yet in an almost identical quotation of the same passage that appears in *The British Dominions in North America* (written by Bouchette's father), the lake is instead called "Kinuagami" (Bouchette 1832, 290), a name that bears an equally striking resemblance to "Kénogami." What obviously remains to be explained is why one version of the quotation has "Kinuagomi" and the other "Tsiamogomi" and what the connection between the two names might be.

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None save the forest-ranger; this will break
His stubborn apathy, his better nature wake.

Deep is the weekday stillness of a church:
Deep is the stillness of an Eastern town,
Where the long grass grows rankly at each porch,
And pestilence, in few short days, hath mown
What time, in years, would not have stricken down:
Deep is the stillness of a desert cell,
Of ruins, with the rust of ages brown:
Of isles, wherein no living creatures dwell,
And nought the calm disturbs, save the song surges' swell.

But deeper is the solemn hush that broods,
Like the low whispering of a dream, among
The shadows of the patriarchal woods;
As if the spell of some old spirit hung
Thereon, and bound their many-toned tongue.
The glossy birch, like column smooth and clean,
The arching boughs, from stalwart maple flung,
The dim soft light, the aisles of sombre green
All cheat the willing sense, and wear a temple's mien.

A spacious temple, where the unchecked eye
Through high and far-diverging vaults may see:
An ancient temple, where all live to die,
And dies to nourish some fresh-springing floe:
A lasting temple? —No, this may not be!
The tide of cultivation rolls along
With ruthless haste, and stern utility
Shall silence soon the low, delicious song
Of the wood-elves that sit the forest-glades among.

But if this show of vegetative life
Fatigues the eyesight, it may find repose
In the stern brute, blackened with the strife
Of wind and flame, when the red surge arose

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Blasting alike the pine tree and the rose.
Chill scene of desolation! Naught is here
But sharp and naked stumps; the dull breeze blows
With a strange sound of sullenness and fear,
Make the tall weeds nod, like plumes upon a bier.

Far other are the scenes which girdle thee,
Bright Isiamagomi! Thy waters sleep
Most tranquilly beneath the sheltering lee
Of pine-clad hills, that rise, in awful sweep,
Mount above mount, a wild, Titanic heap.
Thou wakenest the mind, with spell of might,
To many passions: we could almost weep,
Standing beside thee in the cold starlight,
And thinking of dear friends, who rest in coffined night.

In sunny day, thy view is to the heart,
A pure and wholesome well of cheerfulness,
Making the pulse with quickened rapture start,
And spirit glow with strong desire to bless.
In gloom and storm, deep is the silentness
With which we hear the thunder's voice of dread
Shout through each glen and cavernous recess,
While clouds come trooping through each mountain head,
And thou liest far below, unruffled, leaden, dead!

There is a rock, precipitous and bare,
On the lake's northern shore. At distance spied
It bears the aspect of a bird of air,
Vast, lone, and brooding by the waterside.
The spell of old tradition doth abide
On that hoar cliff, whose touching loneness brings
A dimness to the eye for him who died
Thereon, whose heart had yearned for unfound things,
And broke at last, worn out by crushed imaginings.

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And here, they say, it was his wont to lie
For hours, and gaze upon the lake beneath,
As if there were some binding sympathy
Between these waters, roughened by no breath.
And his own being's still and pulseless death.
And oft the nightly fisher, on his float,
Felt superstitious terrors round him wreathe
To hear a voice from upper air remote,
As if a spirit spoke, the guardian of the spot.

What he had suffered, why he thus repined,
Is all surmise. Some said his talk was much
Of one, whose mood had changed, and grown unkind,
And so had withered him; —of beauty, such
As few might have, and live without reproach.
God pity him! How bitter must it be
To rest our young hopes on a broken crutch,
To feel warm hands grow icy-cold, to see
The eye wax passionless, whose look was ecstasy!

One summer's day, some hunters pitched their camp
Below the rock. The sun went down in gloom,
The air grew thick and hot, a heavy damp
Struck on the heart, and, silent as the tomb,
The lake lay waiting for the wrath come.
It came—no tempest broke, no whirlwind skirred,
To usher in its mutterings of doom,
Alone the Earthquake spoke, alone was heard
The deep, hoarse voice of awe, the hill and water stirred.

And all that night, they said, at intervals,
The anchorite talked wildly with the air,
Filling the place with wailings, and loud calls
That rose to sink in terrible despair.
Day dawned at last, the moon's distempered glare
Gave place unto the bright and cheerful sun,
And then they scaled the cliff in haste, and there

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They found a pale, grief-wasted corse,[2] whereon
The living sunbeams looked, in hollow mockery down.

And so he died, in lonely sorrow died,
Unseen, uncared for. There was none to weep
For him, the child of broken lore and pride,
Yet, let us hope, his soul is buried deep,
Like a tired child's, in soft and happy sleep.
None wept for him, but now the lake doth wear
A desert aspect, and the granite steep
Seems musing wistfully, and silence drear
Reigns through the hoary woods, his refuge and his bier.

E.T.F.

12 May 1838

2 An archaic form of "corpse."

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The Dead Sea

1838

Behold the dark and sullen wave
That rolls about fair Siddim's grave!
In silent awe we gaze upon
The waters, where oblivion
Hath her sable mantle spread
O'er the cities of the dead.

Glad and bright the morning broke,
When Siddim's myriads awoke
On that judgment-dealing day
That saw them swept the chaff away.
The sun arose with his wonted state,
And gave no sign of their coming fate;
Each flower peeped forth from the golden vale
To meet the kiss of the spicy gale,
Like a maiden shy, when her lover is near,
Half in pleasure, and half in fear;
The drowsy hum of the insect-kind
Came like music on the wind,
And bird and flower, in gorgeous throng,
Wooed the sun with bloom and song.

Sudden all was hushed and dumb
God's avenging hour had come!

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Every heart with fear was quaking,
Every knee with terror shaking,
When, amid the darkened air,
They saw the arm of Vengeance bare!
Swift, that pause of wonder o'er
Came the hurricanoe's [*sic*] roar!
Rose the fierce, blaspheming howl,
Blended with the thunder's growl;
The virgin's shrik [*sic*] of horror wild,
The mother's wailing o'er her child,
The sinner's hoarse and gasping prayer
For life, the ravings of despair,
And many a quick, convulsive cry
Of nature's parting agony!
Still, down and down, unceasing came
The stifling deluge of smoke and flame,
And when it ceased, a lurid cloud
Hung, enwrapping, like a shroud,
That reeking spot of guilt and woe,
Whose glory thus was leveled low.

And now, though nigh four thousand years
Have rolled along, and with them smiles and tears,
At times, in the depths of that lovely sea,
The crumbling palaces still we may see;
But the weeds over column and capital climb,
The gloss of the marble is hidden with slime,
And their former tenants have passed away,
And their beauty is gone forever and aye!

A spell of gloom is on the strand,
The haggard rocks, the desert sand,
And the dry and barren sod;
A mighty voice the place has banned,
A mighty breath the ruin fanned,

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A mighty curse is on the land—
The voice, the breath, the curse of God!

"Tabitha"

19 June 1838

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The Broomstick

1838

Aye, there it stood! —
An ancient broomstick, hacked and torn,
Crippled, soiled, and weather-worn,
In solitude!
'Alas!' thought I, 'thou poor old stump,
How many a heartless scrub and thump,
Hast thou, in patient silence suffered!
It makes me puff hard!
Oh! what a tale of sweeping tone
Couldst thou recite,
Fragmental sprite,
Although thy "sweeping tail" is gone!'
—I started; could I believe my eyes—
From out the broomstick seemed to rise
A shadowy head, a pair of shoulders,
A body, and its two upholders,
Then feet:
And lo! in attitude commanding,
The 'spirit of a broom' was standing
Complete!
In accents dignified yet bland
'Fear not,' it said, and waved its hand,
'But hearken calmly to my tale—
Alas! but one continued wail,'

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'In early life, I snuffed the breeze
Much the same as other trees:
How keen and fresh it floated through
My leaves, with music ever new!
While, from his topaz throne on high,
Our glorious Deity
Threw back his locks of gold, with love divine,
And beamed his own bright smile, majestic and benign!'

'Oh!—
—He!
Forgive this pause of mute despair,
—Although I'm but a ghost, whene'er
Fond memory rushes
Upon my mind, my powers of utterance stop;
A heart flood gushes,
And then—I weep like any water-mop!'

'Well, all our fates must be fulfilled:
T'was mine to be in childhood killed.
Lopt, and shaped, and neatly bundled,
Off to market I was trundled:
And lo! one morn I found myself a broom,
And skimming along a dining-room!'

'At first I served a venerable dame,
Who ne'er had changed, or wished to change, her name:
In deeds of charity
Her peaceful lifestream glided sweetly by.
Years here I staid, but not in vain,
I always strove experience to gain,
Nor ever let my observation rust,
But swept up wisdom as I swept up dust.
Her memory I shall ever bless,
She used me with such tenderness!
Well, the old girl in "andro-phobia" lived,
Until her seventieth natal day arrived;

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But "flesh is frail
As pot or pail,"
So the ancient psalmist saith;
And she, when seventy stoic years had past,
Stept from the path of rectitude at last,
And fell into the arms of—death!'

'The next I lived with was a "ladies'-man":
I little cared to scan
Each harmless, milk-and-water folly
Of this un-petticoated Molly.
Not withered, yet, by Fortune's frown,
His days were spent in riding round the town,
And earning goodly reputation,
By harsh, affected cachinnation,
Among two-thirds of woman-kind—
The over-simple, and the over-kind.'

"'Hallo!" cried I, "excuse my incivility
"Where have you learned such scandalous scurrility?"
—Pshaw! quoth the sneering sprite with stiff-necked gloom,
"Scurrility is innate in a Brougham."'[1]

'When from this household I went forth, I
Next served a well-conditioned worthy,
Whose ruling passion stood confest
In the tightness of his sack-like vest,
And round luxuriance of limb:
He loved the cook, but ah! she loved not him.
One morn, a vision met my wakening eyes,
That made my hairs with bristling horror rise:'

"'There he stood with open eye
Fixed on the broomstick, silently
Swiftly swinging round to smite,"

1 The enclosed cabin of a Brougham carriage may have offered privacy to those inside.

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In breathless fright!
Up I went with a twist and a twirl,
Down I came with a whizz and a whirl—
Whack!
On his back!'

* * *

Suddenly the spirit stopped,
And farther uttrance [*sic*] cropped;
—O wonderful! —his stature seemed to grow
To something diabolic, and a glow
Scorching and withering, from his features shone—
I yelled and started up—my reverie was gone!
It seems that I, at first, had stood
In musing mood,
With skirts upraised, and back towards the fire,
The true position of an English squire—
And, quite unconscious of my threatened fate,
Stepped back at last, and sate upon the grate!

"Korah"

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Alma Mater

1838

Dædallan Earth! Thou with the crown of flowers,
And robe of ocean blue, and zone of green
Whose garland is of many-coloured clouds,
Whose treasures are the silent monitors
That awaken joy, and hope, and holy tears—
O Earth! o'erspread with laughing rivulets,
And kingly trees, and prayer-impelling hills,
Why art thou beautiful? Alas! alas!
Sorrow, and sin, and death are in the world;
And semblances unreal, and high hopes,
For ever springing, and for ever crushed!
Our strength is like the Danite's;[1] but, like his,
It hath no eyes to guide it; and our days
Are but a yearning and a mystery.
So we go forth upon the road of life
With a half soul, and ever strive to find
The counterpart, but die and find it not!
Oh, cruel mother! Why this jubilee,
This song of birds, and sunshine, and sweet flowers,
When we, thy children, wail, and sin, and die?

1 The Tribe of Dan (Judge) was one of the Tribes of Israel. Fletcher may be referring to the contemporary Danites of the Mormon Church who participated in the 1838 Mormon War. The Mormon Danites organized a month prior to the poem's publication and were reported in contemporary newspapers.

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Great essence of all good! —unseen, unheard,
Yet heard, and felt, and witnessed everywhere;
Dayspring of light, and centrefire of warmth!
Great mind! that radiates through all space,
Flowing, and flowing, but unfailing still:
Great law! by which all happiness is linked
With virtue, and all misery with vice;
Great son of glory, into which our souls,
Sooner or later, all shall flow at last—
Uphold me! Strengthen in me those desires,
Those blind mysterious instincts that bespeak
The caged and struggling Deity within!
So shall my soul press onward from the eclipse
Of time and death, and, like a summer sun
Serene, enlarged, undimmed by cloud or mist,
That sets on us to rise on other lands—
Unfaltering, yet full of thankfulness,
Look for a last time on the long-loved haunts,
And so go down in steadfast majesty!

"Korah"

Quebec, 21 July 1838

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The Brothers

1838

There were two scions of a noble house,
Brothers in nature and affection. They—
In their fresh-breathing days of infancy—
Rejoiced and wept, and prayed in unison:
Each found a pleasure double sweet, whene'er
His brother shared it; and their every sport
Lost half its value if enjoyed alone.

Time passed. The elder, flattered and caressed
By the sleep minions of his father's house,
Began to look with coldness upon him
Who erst has been so dear. His brother saw
And mourned the change; 'til, wounded to the soul
With insult and neglect, he left his home
Nor saw it more.

Years wore away. A wanderer on the earth
He moved among his fellowmen: his hand,
His words were with them, but his mind was not.
Yet did he much of good; the son's of grief,
And daughter's of affection, were to him
Linked in a bond of brotherhood and love.
He sheered the path, and cleared the eyes of age,
And whispered words of renovating power,

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That fell like manna on their withered hearts.
He lived amid the benisons of these,
Nor sought for more. And, when at length he died,
They laid him in a green and quiet spot,
That seemed a fairy-natured solitude:
And aged men did bow their heads, and breathe
Blessings unheard but felt; and children came,
And scattered flowers upon his lonely grave,
And deemed it holy ground. Thus, far away
From home and kindred, was he stricken down,
And laid by strangers in the narrow house.

Meanwhile, how fared the elder one? Begirt
With honours, pleasures, fawnings, flatteries,
The puny lordling thought himself a god
For men to crouch and worship. He beheld
A seeming form of pleasure flit around,
And desperately strove to capture it.
He clasped his hands, and beauty stretched her arms,
Musicians played their choicest melodies,
And all that most delights the heart of man
Was placed within his grasp. What wonder then
That, as he grew, he learned to spurn his kind,
To close his ear to penury's lament,
And heap contempt on desolation's cry!
He breathed an atmosphere of courtly smiles,
And with the peers and magistrates of the land,
He held familiar intercourse. But still,
Amid the crowds that thronged to honour him,
He felt the utter hollowness of all,
He knew himself most lone, most desolate.
Last, he too died. With ceremonious rites,
And gorgeous pomp, they carried him towards
The mausoleum of his ancestors;
And, 'neath the banners, and escutcheonry,

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And hoar insignia of his noble line,
They laid him down, and coldly left him there.

Such is their tale. Who may not draw from hence
A moral and a marvel?

"Korah"

30 August 1838

https://doi.org/10.15215/aupress/9781771993449.01

Fame and Friendship

1838

Spirit of glory! tell me why
All that is dearest and best must die!
Why are the friends we love the most
Never fully known but lost?
Why is the earth like a godly bower,
Roofed and walled with fruit and flower,
Wherein we sport with careless glee
Awhile, then start and shake to see
A fleshless figure, coldly sneering,
Through the leafy woodbine peering?
They say that Joy is born a twin;
But ah! his aspect cherubin
Is strangely matched with the cypress-wreath
That binds the brow of his brother—Death!

Spirit of glory! what is fame?
What have we to do with a name,
Who toil, and toil, to plant repate,[1]
But may not live to taste the fruit?
We die away, and honour's stir
Can never pierce the sepulchre!

1 Repate: an archaic term meaning "renown."

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Child of earth! come forth with me
And upper clouds and the lower sea,
And the womb of earth, shall answer thee!

How still it is below the sea!
    How still and dim it is!
How strange the nights that greeted me
    In that serene abyss!
There's many a spire, and giant stair,
And many a coral hall;
The water is as free as air,
    And antic shapes are moving there,
    But hushed and voiceless all!

On we went, and many a spoil,
Rusted anchor, cable-coil,
Scattered jewels, cannon old,
Boarding pikes, and bars of gold,
Lay all around us; these we passed,
And came upon a desert vast,
Whose light was hoar, and indistinct,
Resembling, rather, light extinct;
And there a host of spectres sate,
Silent all, and separate.
There was no stir, no sound, no speech,
But each looked steadfastly on each:
Ah me! The blood my heart forsook,
To see that cold and haggard look!
—And the spirit whispered in my ear,
"The newly-dead are gathered here!"

* * *

Down, down we go to central earth,
    My Spirit-guide and I;
Who laughs? —A ghoul has a fit of mirth,
    To see a man go by!

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How long, how long the dreary way!
        How dark this chasm-rent!
How solemn is this moaning fray
Of floods that roll in gloom away,
        In this hot dungeon pent!
Oh, take me up to the place of day;
        My strength is almost spent!

Ha! the passage widens now;
        Cooler grows the air:
Cheerful light begins to glow
        On a prospect fair:
I see the glorious groves, that reach
        Many a mile away;
There is a murmuring sounds of speech,
        —But the speakers where are they?

I see them now; and tell me, who
Are those who wander two by two,
With looks and words so softly kind,
And arms affectionately twined?
And who are these, who stand and wait
Lonely, and disconsolate,
And greet, at last, with warm embrace,
And tears, some new arriver's face?
—Who are these, whose fondness seems
Sad and beautiful as dreams?
—These are friends of old, whose love
First began on the Earth above;
Whose strong affection would not wane,
But stood through guilt, and grief, and pain,
And now, when life and death are past,
Their love continues to the last!

* * *

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The upper clouds, the upper clouds,
How beautiful they are!
How crowned with light the starry crowds
Of spirits wandering there!
Here; too, are cloud-piled palaces.
With gold and crimson domes,
And masterminds of Earth in these
Have everlasting homes.

I saw a temple huge and high,
And stamped with antique blazonry,
With stars and moons, and planet-rings
And Nature's dim and awful springs.
In lines along the shadowy hall,
Stood a thousand columns tall;
And spirits thronged with noiseless feet
To offer adoration tacet
Before the cloud-girt throne, whereon
Sat a figure, still as stone,
Broad of brow, and mild of eye,
Yet he wore an aspect high,
Serenely proud and meekly cold;
—this was EPICURUS old!

We entered, next, a stately fane;
Where sword, and spear, and battle-vane,
And shivered brow, and buckler broken,
Trophied show, and conquest-token
Of Pontus, Spain, Œgyptus, Gaul,
Martially bedecked the wall.
High on the altar-seat of slate,
A form of generous bearing sate:
This was the Roman Conqueror,
Historian, and orator.

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How envious was the ingrate blow
That laid the noble JULIUS low!

Then a mansion met my view,
Robed in clouds of lightning hue.
Dazzled by the sudden blaze,
Down, awake, I cast my gaze,
Then hastened through the porch, to see
Whose memorial this might be.
Within, a song of triumph swelled,
Never falling, still upheld—
A song that shook the vaulted hall
With its sound majestical.
Round about, a multitude
Circle within circle stood,
And every look was cast above,
And beamed with patriotic love;
I, too, looked up, and thought to see
A shape of bright supremacy,
—But lo! a peasant sat upon
The throne of adoration;
A man of meek, reflective air,
And yet his eye had a sudden glare,
As if he thought of the days of old,
When his own small band of peasants rolled,
Torrent-like, to overthrow
The Gallic and Bavarian foe.
—This was he, who led his few
Valesmen—aye, and women too!
For women joined in the holy fight,
And rolled from every mountain height,
The trunk of a tree, or a massy stone,
Crushing their foemen, flesh and bone!
—Who marshalled forth their rude attack,
And quelled, with awful rout and rack,
The proud invaders, who had come

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By myriads, with trump and drum,
Thick as leaves on summer trees,
—This was the HOFER the Tyrolese![2]

E.T.F.

2 Andreas Hofer (1767–1810) was a Tyrolean innkeeper and folk hero who led the Tyrolean Rebellion against Napoleon's invasion of the Austrian Empire.

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Boadicea: A Vision of Old Times

1838

Hark! The wild hunter-call, the gathering-cry,
The promise of a swift and sure revenge,
Singing through England's ancient forest-grounds.
—Whither so hastily, O warrior bold?
'To fight for Boadicea and our land.'
—Whither so hastily, O stripling rash?
'To fight for Boadicea and our land.'
—Whither so hastily, O Druid old?
'To fight for Boadicea and our land.'

Strange was the contrast of the rival hosts.
On one side stood the Roman soldiery,
Perfect in arms, a firm and solid mass,
With lance and buckler glancing in the sun.
Opposed to them, a stern and dusky crowd
Covered the upland slope. Rude hunting spears,
And wicker shields, and scythed chariots,
Appeared among their host; but they themselves
Stood naked in their war-paint, and unclad,
Save the loose wolf-skin girt about their loins.
Deep silence came upon them, when their Queen
Arose to speak; but sorrowing and shame
Had quelled the utterance of her lion heart:
Twice rose her towering form, and twice again
She bent in silence; then, at last, one word,

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One deep, far-penetrating whisper came—
'Strike.' —and they struck.
Spear-point and helm, and iron panoply
Went down before the rush of naked men:
Gleamed the blue eye, and breath came hot & thick,
And ridgy muscles leapt up from the arm,
Writhing and straining with a giant's grasp.
All martial order was unthought of then;
All art and discipline was trodden down;
And as the surges rend some stately bark,
Whose ribs of oak and solid bolted frame
Seemed almost everlasting in their strength,
So the wild onset of these savages
Broke through the serried lines of Roman war.
It was no conquest but a slaughtering;
No strife, but a pursuit; no victory,
But an extermination of their foes.
Still the wild work went on; till, at the last,
A stalwart chieftain tossed his arm aloft,
And, standing thus, as if he felt a pride
In his strong beauty, with a trumpet voice,
Cried 'Victory!'—and all the warriors,
And all the Druids and the sacred bards,
And women watching on the mountain tops,
And even the eternal hills themselves,
Caught up the sound, and gave back 'Victory!'

Such was the massacre at Colchester.
But England has been fruitful in bold Queens: —
Ethelfrid, she who quelled her brother's foes;
Phillippa then, who trod on Scotland's neck;
Jane Grey, who earned the martyr's holy wreath;
Elizabeth, the scourge of haughty Spain,
With many such; and now Victoria[1]

1 Fletcher seems to be writing in the shadow of the 1837 and 1838 Rebellions to support Queen Victoria.

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Comes, full of promise, to the throne of power.
O, God of battles! let her empire be
Not over hands but hearts. Let her keep down
The frantic efforts of the mob (who strive
To mutilate our Constitution-ark)
With gloves of velvet, but with hands of iron;
Let her career of widespread sovereignty
Be as a planet's calm and regular,
Not as a comet's, scattering fear and awe.
And when her mighty power shall yield at last
To mightier death, let her dear memory be
Embalmed and consecrated with the tears
And blessings of all time. Amen. Amen.

E.T.F.

Quebec, 16 December 1838

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Day-Dawn

1839

Who hath not seen, when some one, high in power,
Is landing on a foreign coast, how long
The people stand before the appointed hour,
And wait his coming? Then, at last, the throng,
Filling the streets, and strewn o'er house and tower,
Is shaken with a murmur deep and strong
Of 'Lo! he cometh;' and the myriads shower
One mighty welcome as he rides along.
Such is the earnest waiting, when the sky
Proclaims the sun is coming. Fog and mist
Are rent asunder, and the world's great eye
Opens and smiles, by trembling Phosphor kissed.
He comes at last! With burst of glorious light,
He comes: and yet how meekly in his might!

Noon

How wearisome is sunshine to the sad! —
I have seen those who turned away from all
The gorgeous show of noon, as if it had
No power to make the human spirit glad.
To them the broad bright earth, the rise and fall
Of many wood-crowned hills, all richly clad
In one unwavering splendour, was as gall,
Or, at the best, but coldly natural.

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God! what a high invaluable gift
Is a new heart! Grown old in sin, we weep
To find that nothing more, nor flower, nor sun,
Nor open sky, nor shady mountain rift,
Can warm us as of old: —that life is done,
And all its dreams have faded into sleep.

Night

A windy midnight! Heavy clouds are swinging
High up in air, and feverishly flinging
Along the dusky earth a duskier shade.
And see! Through yon deep rent the moon is winging
Her hurried way, all wild and tempest-frayed;
Now, like a lone and banished seraph, clinging
To some dark cloud-edge, there a moment stayed—
Then drifting downwards without hope or aid.
How dim and awful! Was it so of old,
Before the world was made, when nothing lived
Save God alone, and seeds of beauty rived
The dark at random, like yon orbs of gold? —
But lo! a glorious change. The clouds are gone;
And all the land with holy light is strewn.

Quebec, 15 September 1839

https://doi.org/10.15215/aupress/9781771993449.01

Lilith

1840

Wer? —Adams erste Frau.[1]
Faust

I

Ages ago, when Adam lived on earth,
First man, first monarch, strong in limb and mind,
In whom a glorious beauty was combined
With thoughts of fire; when sin had not gone forth,
As a wide pestilence, among mankind,
Dulling the senses to the healing worth
Of woods, and waves, and sunshine unconfined,
Which then were audible with song and mirth,
Lilith had being. She was one of those
Shadowy spirits, from that twilight bred
Wherewith, at first the world was overspread:
But, three great periods past, the sun arose,

1 "Who? —Adam's first wife," from Goethe's *Faust*, scene 21. Faust is walking in the mountains in the company of the demon Mephistopheles. It is Saint Walpurgis Night, the eve of the festival of Saint Walpurgis, on which witches gather and local people set bonfires to ward away evil. His eyes falling on a woman who reminds him of his beloved, Faust inquires who she is, and Mephistopheles replies that she is Lilith. "Who?" Faust asks, and Mephistopheles identifies her as Adam's first wife and warns Faust to beware of her seductive powers. In Jewish and Gnostic mystical traditions, Lilith is a demonic temptress who is indeed sometimes portrayed as Adam's original sexual partner (or "wife").

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And one by one her sister spirits fled,
And she remained, hid in a cavern close.

II

There was a broad, still lake near Paradise,
A lake where silence rested evermore:
And yet not gloomy, for, along the shore,
Majestic trees, and flowers of thousand dyes,
Drank the rich light of those unclouded skies:
But noiseless all. By night, the moonshine hoar,
And stars in alternating companies;
By day, the sun: no other change it wore.
And hither came the sire of men, and stood
Breathless amid the breathless solitude:
Shall he pass over? Inconceivable,
And unconjectured things perhaps might dwell
Beyond—things, haply, pregnant with new good—
He plunged: the waters muttered where he fell.

III

And on, and on, with broad, untiring breast,
The swimmer cleft the waters. As he went,
Things full of novelty and wonderment
Rose up beside him. Here it was the crest
Of a steep crag, up to the heavens sent.
And here a naked pine trunk, forward bent
A hundred yards above him: still no rest,
Onwards and onwards still the swimmer pressed.
But now the lake grew narrower apace:
The father shore curving nearer in:
Till, at the last, there towered before his face
A wall of rock, a final stopping-place:
But no—an opening! Shall he pass therein,
The way unknown, the day now vespertine?

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IV

He entered in. How dim! how wonderful!
High-arched above, and water paved below;
And phosphor cressets, with a wavering glow,
Lit up the mighty vault. A whisper cool
Ran muttering all around him, and a dull,
Sweet sound of music drifted to and fro,
Wordless, yet full of thought unspeakable,
Till all the place was teeming with its flow.
'Adam! —Strong child of light!' — 'Who calls? who speaks?
What voice mysterious the silence breaks—
Is it a vision, or reality?'
How marble like her face! How pale her cheeks!
Yet fair, and in her glorious stature high,
Above the daughters of mortality.

V

And this was Lilith. And she came to him,
And looked into him with her dreamy eyes,
Till all his former life seemed old and dim,
A thing that had been once: and Paradise,
Its antique forest, floods, and choral skies,
Now faded quite away: or seemed to skim,
Like eagles on a bright horizon's rim,
Darkly across his golden phantasies.
And he forgot the sunshine, and sweet flowers,
And he forgot all pleasant things that be,
The birds of Eden, and the winged powers
That visited, sometimes, its privacy:
And what to him was day, or day lit hours,
Or the moon shining on an open sea?

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VI

So lived he. And she fed him with strange food,
And led him through the sparry corridors
Of central earth. How solemnly that flood
Went moaning by! How strange that multitude
Of moving shadows, and those strong ribbed doors,
Between whose earthquake riven chinks he viewed,
With gasping breath, the red and glowing stores
Whence the great Heart drives heat through all its pores.
And Lilith's voice was ever in his ear,
With its delicious tones, that made him weep,
He knew not wherefore: and her forehead clear
Beamed like a star—yet made his spirit creep
With something of that undefined fear,
That shadows us, when love is over deep.

VII

This might not last. What thunder shakes the arch?
What light'ning, in its swift and terrible march,
Shatters the massy keystone? —Sudden light
Leaps down, and many a column stalactite
Is rent and shivered as a feeble larch.
Alas for Lilith! Shrieking with affright,
He bowed, and felt the hateful splendour parch
Her soul away: yet, ere she vanished quite,
'Think of me sometime, Adam,' murmured she,
'Let me not perish, and my memory be
Lost and forgotten. Now farewell, farewell!
We have been happy—that is past, and we
May love no longer.' Wakened from his spell,
He turned: —the sun was shining where she fell!

Quebec, 1839

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Dante in Exile

1844

I

It was the hush of golden eventide;
And Santa Croce's holy valley lay
In deepest silence. Worn and heavy-eyed,
As with long woes, a stranger wound his way,
Along the undulating mountainside.
—Oh, loftiest singer of that triple Lay
Whose glory fills the universe, what sway
Of hard oppression or vindictive pride
Constrains thee now? Oh! for some pitying hand
To wipe away the dew of suffering
From his most mournful brow! Prophet and king
Of human hearts and passions, thou must roam
Far from thy own bright Florentine home,
Death-doomed and exiled, homeless, friendless, banned!

II

And many passed him on that mountain road,
Unknowing who he was. But the tall trees,
The impending crags, and shady privacies
Of glen and grove, where formerly abode

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Old Tuscan sybils and haruspices,
These knew him well. At once a murmur flowed
Through all the air, of 'Dante!—he that trod
'The spirit-world! that sang its mysteries!'
Such murmur soothed his anguish. Journeying thus,
He reached the monastery: wonder-stirred,
Gazed he that had the portal in his keeping
On Dante's face: 'What seek'st thou here of us?'
'Peace!' said the wanderer, and with that one word
His great heart burst in agony of weeping.

E.T.F.

Montreal, 23 August [1844]

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Medea Mater*

1845

Beautiful dreamers! Oh! sleep on, sleep on!
  There is no sound or stir on earth or sky,
  And blessed influences from on high
Descend like dew. Thou Bay Saronian,
Dimly afar, with moonlight overstrewn,
  I see thee now. Almost I am at peace:
  All misery and anguish seem to cease,
Beneath this holy time's dominion.

Smiles! aye, and lute-voiced laughter. In your sleep,
  Beloved sons, what glowing phantasies
  Are thronging now around you? Do your eyes
Feast, in imagination, on the sweep
Of those great hills, where gods their vigils keep?
  Or, haply, on fair rallies, which the hours
  Bless with perennial, incense breathing flowers;
Such vales as bloom beneath the Olympian steep.

It was a day to be remember'd over,
  The day that saw us floating down the stream

* In the older Theogonies, Medea always appears as a divine person. Hesiod expressly names her as one of the "immortals wedded to mortal men." [This is Fletcher's own note. He uses the term "Theogonies" in a generic sense, to refer to traditional genealogies of the gods, and then quotes from the most famous of these, Hesiod's *Theogony*, at lines 963–68. See also lines 993–1002, which describe Medea's liaison with a mortal man (Jason).]

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Of ancient Peneus. With the morn's first beam,
And where, with scarce perceptible endeavour,
Solemn and slow, the sacred waters sever
Mount Phaestus from the hills of Thessaly;
We launch'd our bark. There were none others by,
Save those beloved ones who left me never.

O the glad freshness of that summer dawn!
The thrilling song of birds, the rich perfume
Of thousand, thousand flowers, the dim seen bloom
Of wild Pangaean roses, thickly strewn
O'er hill and dell, green glade and glossy lawn,
And, over all, the blue immensity,
The kindling east, the starlit western sky,
Day, as a god, advancing slowly on!

Elysium of earth! the awed content,
That over all my happy soul had grown.
Rose not from thy magnificence alone;
But there was one—one who beside me bent
With murmur'd words, of love and worship blent,
And therefore was I happy. Human love
A magic mightier than my own had wove,
A spell that silenced all presentiment.

Thus, silent with deep joy, through Tempe's vale
We drifted on. But now the dreamy calm
Of gorgeous noon was past, and grateful balm
Refresh'd the air, and farm'd the drooping sail.
So evening shadows found us. Silvery pale,
The moon arose o'er Pelion, and the sun
Behind Olympus went serenely down,
Whose awful shadow wrapt us as a veil.

* * *

https://doi.org/10.15215/aupress/9781771993449.01

Would I were mortal! Men are born and die:
  And with them dies the memory of their woe;
  The wearied spirit unrepining goes
To rest, to renovation. Misery
I mine for ever. As the stars on high,
  That change not, grow not dim, so I must reign,
  A fixed despair—immortal in my pain,
Fill'd with one thought, a thought of joys gone by!

* * *

By the deep love with which I honour'd thee,
  By the wild worship, and surrendering
  Of my whole being, all that I could bring,
And offer'd thee with rapt humility:
By the old days which weeping memory
  Still holds enclasped, a hoard of treasured pain,
  By all that has been, may not be again—
Bitter, most bitter, shall thy nuptials be!

And these—these are thy children—they must die!
  Let none dare question me—let no soft wind
  Whisper me aught! I would not—would not find
Weak pleadings in the mother-thoughts that ply
So fondly at my heartstrings. Thou, oh sky!
  Look not so pitifully. ———
                All is past:
  I am alone. They were too bright to last,
Those glorious dreams of fond humanity!

So passes from me earth: and I return
  To my Olympian home. Daughter of gods,
  Must I re-enter those serene abodes
Reluctant and regretting? Must I mourn
At passing once again the shadowy bourne?
  Aye! with a heart all desolate and cold,

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Medea fallen comes. Immortals, hold
Your looks of pity, spare your frozen scorn!

Farewell, bright land wherein I loved to dwell!
Thou blue Tropontid lake—thy cloud-veiled dome,
Strobilus hoar—and thou, my Grecian home,
Land of the ilex and the asphodel!
And oh! far more than these—thou rapturous swell
Of human fondness—mother-love, that grew
The holier for its sorrows—life, that knew
Such weeping joy and pain—Farewell! Farewell!

May 1845

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Gentry

1849

When the ruddy morn is breaking,
And the sweet-toned birds are waking
From dreams of night,
To hail the light
That smiles on Nature everywhere;
Lift up thy voice to God in prayer.

When the noon-day beam is glancing,
And the bright sun ray is dancing,
O'er babbling brook,
And flowery nook;
Forget awhile each earthly care,
And lift thy voice to God in prayer.

When the evening sun's declining,
And the day with night's entwining,
And shrouds of gold
The clouds enfold;
O, let the passing zephyr bear
On high to God thy humble prayer.

When the wearied earth is sleeping,
and the night her tears is weeping,
And moonbeams pale
Rest on the vale;

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O then, unheard by mortal ear,
Pour out thy soul to God in prayer.

Thus, as down life's stream we're drifting,
Let our hearts be ever lifting
To Him above,
Who sheds his love
On every humble spirit here,
That seeks the great I AM in prayer.[1]

1 The poem was accompanied by a musical score based on a melody by G. S. Stevens and arranged for the *Sunday School Advocate*.

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The Long Poems

The Lost Island

[1887] 1895

To my sister Harriett

I

Silent and lonely, in the summer-night,
Lay the great city. Through the marble streets
No footstep moved: the palaces, the seats
Of wealth and power, the domes of malachite,
Where sculptured dragons, monsters carved in stone,
Alternated with statues clear and white,
Of ancient warrior-kings, that stood in rows
Along the Cyclopean porticoes,
Were hushed: and over all the moonlight shone.

II

Along the beach, beneath the massy wall,
The great sea rippled drowsily: afar
The headland glimmered, like a misty star,
Wearing a cloud wreath for a coronal;
And all the air was filled with tremulous sighs
Borne from the waste of waters, musical,
Yet dreamy soft, as some old Orphic hymn,
That floated up, what time the day grow dim,
From Dorian groves, and forest privacies.

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III

Yet, in the voiceless silence of the hour,
An awful presence moved. Unseen, unheard,
It glided onward on its way, and stirred
The sleepers' hearts with dreams of gloomy power,
Visions of fear, and throbbings of despair.
The plague was here. There was no house or bower,
Safe from his darts: from every door had gone
Some friend or father, some beloved one,
Borne to his grave by the red torches' glare.

IV

And, as a lovely flower, that seems to fade
In summer's heat, and bows its golden head,
Turning from those fierce heavens overspread,
To muse, in sadness, on some dewy glade.
So, many a maiden perished, white and still,
And many a soft angelic face that made
The sunshine of its home, grown cold and gray
Beneath the coming shadow, passed away;
So warm of late, now passionless and chill.

V

Alas! the little children—where was now
Their laughter, many voiced? —their sportive wiles,
Their bounding feet, and witchery of smiles,
With floating hair, and faces all aglow?
Silence and fear into their play had come,
Dulling each pulse and shadowing each brow;
And so they wept and wondered. Side by side,
Lay young and old, the bridegroom and his bride,
The child and sage, all summoned to one tomb.

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VI

So rose, at times, through all the moonlit air,
Faint and scarce heard, like voices in a dream,
Low wailing sounds, that told of grief supreme,
The utterance of mourners gathered there.
Almost it seemed that every star which set
Was as a winged messenger, to bear
Some human life to those unloved abodes,
Where dwell, implacable, the lower gods,
Silent as stone, stern-eyed, with locks of jet.

VII

Fast waned the night, yet, ere the morning came,
The portals of the palace opened wide,
The sculptured valves fell back on either side,
The lamps within flashed forth a sudden flame;
And swift, into the dim uncertain light,
Which neither night nor day might wholly claim.
There stepped a figure of heroic mien,
Fair as a goddess, stately and serene,
A star-like apparition, pure and white.

VIII

This was the island queen, Evanoè;[1]
All unattended, save by one stout thrall,
Who followed humbly, at some interval.
With noiseless foot she trod the marble way.
So passed she on, towards the open lea

1 Ezra Pound would later use this name for the mysterious lady in his early poem "The House of Splendour" (1911), which K. K. Ruthven identifies as "A fictitious name" (125). Miyake argues the name "can only be Dante's Eünoè" (68) meaning the twin to the river of Lethe (forgetting), or literally "good mind." However, both involve a woman who has walked away, suggesting the past form of Ebanoe in Greek. Both poets were possibly referring to Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Moon Queen in *The House of Life* (1881).

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That girt the town in shadowy array,
The palm trees, on her right hand, lifted high
Their crests, clear cut against the opal sky,
And, on her left, she heard the murmuring sea.

IX

Then, as the first faint breeze of morning fanned,
With odorous breath, her cheek incarnadine,
And thrilled each leaf and flower, and crisped the brine,
That crept, like molten silver, to the strand,
She halted at a wayside cottage door,
A lowly hut, that lay 'twixt sea and land,
Retired and peaceful as a hermitage,
Whose porch with orchids, blossoms of wild sage,
And bright convolvuli, was covered o'er.

X

There dwelt her aged nurse, now breathing slow
Her life away. With hand upon the latch,
The youthful queen a moment paused, to watch
The splendour of the morning, and the glow
That deepened in the East. Across the bay,
She saw the hilltops kindling, while, below,
The valleys lay in darkness. One by one,
The small clouds caught the flame: and lo! the sun
Leaped as a giant forth, and it was day.

XI

With throbbing heart she stood, and thoughtful brow:
Then sighed 'Alas! why, in a world so fair,
'Must death have place? Oh balmy summer air,
'Sunshine and clouds, mountains and sea, and thou,
'Illimitable dome of heaven above,
'Phantoms of beauty, ever fresh as now,

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'Receive my greeting! Changeless as of old,
'Ye still remain, when life and love are cold,
'And the web rent, which youth so fondly wove.'

XII

She entered there: and in a moment stepped
From life to death, from sunshine into gloom,
From song of birds to stillness of the tomb,
Where all was silent, saving those who wept.
Through the half-opened casement floated in
The perfume of rare flowers: a lily crept
Along the sill, in drooping sympathy;
The while a honeybee went humming by,[2]
And faintly came from far the city's din.

XIII

Yet, as a lake's calm surface, dull and chill,
Is roused to wavelets by a falling stone,
The sinking soul, that seemed for ever gone,
Woke at the sudden footstep, and a thrill
Of recognition o'er the features passed.
Then, with a mighty effort of strong will,
She laid her hand, most gently, on the head
Of two fair children, kneeling by her bed,
With mute, appealing gaze; it was her last.

XIV

So all was done. Still shone the sun abroad;
And bird and insect, butterfly and flower,
Basked in the glorious splendour of the hour;
Still, through the air, like footsteps of a god,
Murmured the low soft wind, and all was bright:

2 The bee may allude to Artemis, the Greek goddess of chastity.

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No shadow fell on these, nor were they awed,
When, through their midst, a naked human soul
Passed, like an exhalation, to its goal;
A bubble rising to the Infinite.

XV

After few days, the pale form laid at rest
In grassy sward, beside the ocean foam,
The queen set forth towards her palace home:
And, not unmindful of that last bequest,
Took with her those two children as her own.
Weeping they left the comfortable nest,
Where their young life had passed its callow years,
But loving hands soon wiped away their tears,
And hope, new-born, upon their pathway shone.

XVI

It was the eventide. At home once more,
Within her chamber sat Evanoè,
Watching the shadows of the closing day
Gather and darken over sea and shore.
Her soul drank deeply of the soft repose
That lay on all things: so she pondered o'er
The past and present, and, on angel's wings,
Her spirit rose in rapt imaginings,
Beyond the sphere of earth, and earthly woes.

XVII

She sat alone. It was an antique room,
Lofty, not large; the cornice pearl-inlaid;
The floor mosaic; and the wall arrayed
With tapestry whose softly shaded gloom
Was lit with life-like figures, passing fair,
The product of some long-forgotten loom.

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White marble forms, hunters and kings of old,
Stood in quaint nooks, and vases of wrought gold
Held richest flowers, whose perfume filled the air.

XVIII

She thought of many a legendary rhyme
Told by her nurse, in the long-vanished days
When she, a child, sat listening, with fixed gaze,
To those delightful stories of old time.
Here sat she, patient, on her lowly stool,
And heard how, first, when struck the fated chime,
Out of the deep, like a fair lotus flower,
ATLANTIS rose, and, warmed by sun and shower,
Expanded, bearing all things beautiful.[3]

XIX

Thereon the gods came down, and dwelt with men:
Through the dim avenues of giant trees
They walked conversing; or on peaceful seas
Sublimely trod, nor shrank from human ken.
The air was musical with song and mirth
Of vigorous, lusty life: from glade and glen
Soft clouds of incense rose: the passing hours
Seemed garlanded with amaranthine flowers;
Nor yet was pain or sorrow known on earth.

XX

How was it now? Alas, on all the land
Despair lay darkling, and a mournful cry
Went up, as when a crowded argosy

3 The lotus is an auspicious flower in Sanskrit literature, symbolizing rebirth and enlightenment. At night, the flower closes and is submerged underwater, like the rising and sinking of Atlantis.

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Sinks, perishing, upon a rocky strand.
'Oh,' thought she, 'If some god, some mighty one,
'Should come to sweep, as with a conqueror's hand,
'This pestilence from out the heavy air,
'And bring back health, and joy, and all things fair,
'Him would I honour: he should share my throne.'

XXI

Scarce had the wish been framed, when came a sound
Of sudden thunder, muttering afar,
Nearer it swelled, until, beneath the jar,
The strong walls shook and wavered all around:
A shiver ran along the marble floor,
Up-heaving, like a wave: from out the ground
Mysterious murmurs came: then over all,
Darkness descended, deep, funereal,
Still as the grave, a sea without a shore.

XXII

A spherèd radiance, serene and clear,
Broke in upon the gloom—so softly bright
It seemed some kingly star had lent its light,
Whence came these accents to her startled ear;
'Evanoè! Thy vow hath brought me down,
'To woo and win thee as a suitor here.
'Fear not. Within few days, I come again,
'The plague removed; and thou shalt know me then,
'Lord of the winds, a Marut, Sanadon!'[4]

4 Fletcher identifies the Maruts as wind gods, as indeed they are sometimes called, but they are associated specifically with the violent winds of a storm and are therefore often called storm gods. Fletcher's rather benevolent Marut is thus a bit anomalous.

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XXIII

She heard: she trembled: and her heart beat high,
Amazed with thoughts conflicting; yet she stood
Calm and unfearing in her lion mood,
Fronting all chances with unquailing eye.
Round her the shadows deepened: then, at last,
She woke from stupor, and beheld the sky
All wild above and threatening, and the stars
Fast blotted out by gathering cloudy bars,
And heard the hollow moaning of the blast.

XXIV

All night the tempest raged. Adown the street,
With thunder-call the mad winds raved again:
Day dawned in gloom, and went, and came again,
And still the storm winds, furious and fleet,
Coursed on, above: and sun and stars were dead.
Then came a change. Again with silver feet,
The moonlight came, and kissed each bruised flower;
And morning came, and all the healing power
Of freshened airs, and sunshine overhead.

XXV

So, like a nightmare vision, passed away
The pestilence, and all its gloomy shows.
The fourth day came to end: in hushed repose,
The golden gloaming faded into gray,
Gleaming with stars: and shadows vespertine
Filled all the room where sat Evanoè.
Then came again the god. As some strong spell,
She felt his presence, murmuring 'It is well:
'My people live—are saved—and I—am thine!'

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XXVI

Oh joy! oh happiness! In life's wide waste,
Are there not days whose memory remains
As of an oasis in desert plains;
A reminiscence not to be effaced
Throughout all griefs and all the after-time?
Still, through the gloom, it shines; a pharos, placed
On that far line of youth's enchanted shore,
Where lived we, in the golden days of yore,
When life was new, and all things in their prime.

XXVII

And they were happy through long sunny years,
The island-queen and Sanadon. They moved
In a rich atmosphere of light, and roved
Throughout their realm, like those united spheres,
That walk in pairs along the starry sky,
What time the vault of heaven unveiled appears.
And those two children, once their grandame's care,
Eiridion and Thya, grew up fair,
And strong, and graced with gentle courtesy.

XXVIII

Joyous as summer birds, they wandered oft
Through regions wild and full of loveliness,
Through lonely places, where the hum and stress
Of cities came not, and the air was soft
With balmy odours of sweet-scented pines;
Where, in clear blue, the white clouds sailed aloft,
And streams flowed on through plains, or leaped in falls
From rock to rock, in broken intervals,
Bordered with lotus-blooms, and leafy vines.

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XXIX

Sometimes they went inland, and visited
The mountain solitudes and privacies,
Wherein the island waters had their rise:
And taking, thus, some river at its head,
They drifted downwards on its placid stream,
Passing by caverns dark, and full of dread,
By headlands frowning vast, and flowery sward,
By golden sands, and beds of odorous nard,
And banyan groves, all wondrous as a dream.

XXX

Then, borne aloft in his aerial car,
The Marut brought them over sea and land,
Towards the rising sun, beyond the strand
Of far Iberia. Shining like a star,
Old Atna raised aloft his crown of snow;[5]
But they passed onward, o'er the sandy bar
Of rocky Salmydessus, white with foam,
And traversed so the Euxine, near the home
Of Scythians, and the broad Araxes' flow.[6]

XXXI

Far to the north they saw the boundless plain,
Where roved the mammoth. There, in dusky bands,
Innumerable as the ocean sands,
They wandered, with white tusks and shaggy mane,
Hugest of living beasts that looked on man.
So came they to a rugged mountain chain,

5 Mount Etna (Old Atna) is a volcano in Sicily. In Greek mythology, Zeus trapped the monster Typhon beneath Etna.

6 Salmydessus was a city on the Black Sea, also known as the Euxine. The Scythians were nomadic Iranians to the Ancient Greeks, and "Araxes" is the Greek term for the river Aras, one of the largest rivers of the Caucasus.

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Gloomy and dark, a wilderness forlorn,
So wild, it seemed the world's extremest borne,
Withered and grey with some unending ban.

XXXII

Then, with a sudden, lamentable cry;
Thya exclaimed, 'Oh father, oh my lord,
'What awful shape hangs there, with brow all scored,
'As if with flame of lightning from on high,
'Yet unsubdued, and wearing as a king
'The garment of his silent agony?'
To whom the Marut: 'This is Themis' son,
'The Titan, who, for love to mortals shewn,
'Is doomed, by Zeus, to penal suffering.'[7]

XXXIII

'Go, aid him, if thou wilt. These are, to me,
'An alien race, and alien deities:
'But thou, sweet Thya—there can be, than this,
'No task or office more befitting thee.'
So went she, at the word, with hasty feet,
To some ravine hard by, where sparkled free
A tiny fount of water, icy cold,
And took a hollow shell, therein to hold
The precious draught, than Amrita more sweet.[8]

7 Themis is an ancient Greek Titan closely associated with law and social order. The Vancouver Law Courts housed a statue of Themis (not the Latin Justitia, "Justice") from 1883 until 1911. Her son by Iapetus was Prometheus, who suffers eternally. After granting fire to humanity, Zeus had Prometheus bound to a rock with his liver being eaten each day by a great eagle.

8 *Amrita* is the immortality-giving nectar in classical Hindu tradition, akin to (and etymologically related to) the *ambrosia* of Greek mythology.

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XXXIV

With fearless heart, though hesitating gait,
Low bending in her earnest sympathy,
She stood before the Shape, and raised on high
The proffered cup, with eyes compassionate,
And touched his lips, with words of loving cheer:
And the great Sufferer felt his pangs abate,
And looked on her with wondering, as one
To whom all kindness hath been long unknown,
And dropped, amazed, a solitary tear.

XXXV

Then o'er the wilderness a shadow passed,
With sounds of spirit-wailing, soft and low.
From rock and valley, from the ground below,
From dark abysmal rifts, and spaces vast,
From mossy stone, and shrub, and lonely tree,
Came hollow murmurings; 'Oh thou, who hast
'So much loved man and all created things,
'Thou who hast given us heaven-aspiring wings,
'Prometheus! Soul of love! We weep with thee!'

XXXVI

Silent in thought, the four held on their way
Through sandy wastes, past Sindhu's rapid stream;
Till rose, among the hills, the distant gleam
Of Manasa: and here they made their stay.
It was a lake secluded, in deep calm,
From worldly tumult, and the troublous day,
Where peace unbroken reigned: so still and cool,
Here might repose the heart with anguish full,
And every sorrow here might find its balm.[9]

9 In Hindu mythology, Lake Manasarovar (or simply Lake Manasa) is a symbol of purity. Located in what is today Tibet, at an altitude of close to 4,590 metres, it is generally

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XXXVII

At length, refreshed with welcome rest, they rose,
Crossing the Hima mountains, home of snow,
The stony girdle of the world, and so
Entered on Aryavartha's sacred close.
Land of the marvellous! Here, being's tide
Swept on exultant, through the long repose
Of silent centuries: and glowing life
Came forth, with thousand forms of beauty rife,
On flowery plain and shady mountainside.[10]

XXXVIII

So came they to a dwelling in the wild,
Where weeping filled the house: 'Because, today,'
They said, 'a Daitya comes to bear away
'A victim from us. Shall it be our child,
'That we must give? The mother, or the sire?
'One must we offer, else, unreconciled,
'He will not leave us. Oh, unhappy fate!'
So mourned the simple folk, disconsolate,
Lamenting loud, in mingled grief and ire.

XXXIX

The father spoke out then: 'Me let him take;
'Lo, I am old: the earth no more to me
'Brings fresh delight, as once: the flowery lea,
'Sunshine, and music, and sweet singing, wake
'No answering echo in my spirit now;
'The great gods smile on those who, for the sake
'Of others, dare to die. My life is done.

regarded as the highest body of fresh water in the world. The Sindhu River is also known as the Indus River.

10 "Hima" means "snow": the Himalaya Mountains are literally the "abode of snow." Aryavarta, the land of the Aryans, refers to the northern portion of India.

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'But you, beloved ones, live on, live on,
'Through lengthened years, and with unclouded brow!'

XL

To whom the mother quickly made reply,
'And who will then protect our child, where all
'Is strange and perilous, and help is small?
'Some strong defender should be ever by,
'And therefore is it better that I go.'
This heard the boy, and raised, with laughing eye,
A blade of spear-grass in his hand, and said,
'With this will I strike off the giant's head.'
The parents heard, and smiled amid their woe.

XLI

Then, at the Marut's word, Eiridion
Took up his father's mighty sword, a blade
Forged by celestial hands, and lightly swayed
The heavy falchion, flashing in the sun,
And laughed to hear it whistle through the air.
So, terrible as Indra, strode he on,[11]
Adown the forest path, all hushed and dim
—A temple, sculptured fair with leaf and limb—
And met, and slew the cruel Daitya there.

XLII

Such were the lessons which the Marut taught,
Lessons of pity and of hardihood.
Then rose the four from that green solitude,
And floated westward, over Hadramaut,
Region of death; and passed Canopus hoar,

11 In Vedic mythology, Indra is the king of the gods. He is associated with lightning, thunder, and storms.

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Fresh as a vision of the morning then, and sought
The silence of the lonely western sea,
Unknown and vast, with wild waves rolling free,
Beyond Pyrene, and the sun set shore.[12]

XLIII

Through the dim shadows of the moonlit night,
What phantom comes? The winds have sunk to sleep,
There is no sound or motion on the deep,
Wrapt, as a bride, in veil of gauzy light.
What galley, slow and ghostlike, parts the foam,
With labouring oars, and shredded sails of white,
Battered with storms? 'Behold,' said Sanadon,
'Girt with his friends, Ulysses wanders on,
'Adventurous, forgetful of his home!'

XLIV

The large browed chieftains from Scamander's plain,[13]
Sages and warriors, kings of eldest time,
Sitting as gods—Ulysses, with the rime
Of years upon his beard—the sails—the vane,
Were seen a moment through the gloom; then passed
Beyond their ken, and all was night again.
Slow waned the hours: and when the morning came,
Amid all the pearly orient grew aflame
With crimson light, they reached their isle at last.

12 Hadramaut is the southwest region of Arabia. Canopus is an Ancient Egyptian city in the Nile Delta, and Pyrene is an Ancient Celtic city on the Danube.

13 Scamander was a river god in Greek mythology embodying the Scamander River that flowed across the plain adjacent to Troy.

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XLV

But now, strange notes of warning filled the air:
The sun grew dark at noon without a cloud;
And solemn voices nightly called aloud,
'The hour is well-nigh come! prepare, prepare;
'Atlantis sinks in ruin, and the wave
'Rolls over her who was erewhile so fair!'
Men heard and trembled. Throughout all the land,
Life, with its toils and pleasures, seemed at stand;
Death came apace, and none was there to save.

XLVI

Then came a voice, by night, to Sanadon,
'Arise, and leave the island to its doom!'
Sadly replied he, 'Let it be my tomb,
'If Indra's sons can die!—I have put on
'This human nature, with its warmth of love;
'Shall I renounce the blessings I have won?
'Shall I forsake these trusting hearts, and rise,
'False, and a fugitive, to yonder skies?
'I stay with them. Let the kind gods approve.'

XLVII

The Voice made answer, 'Thou hast spoken well:
'All things grow old and change: but Love remains.'
Again the Marut, 'Ere our respite wanes,
'Ere comes the end, and sounds the fatal knell,
''Tell me, oh pitying spirit, may there be
'Some rescue, some escape, for those who dwell
'Beneath my sceptre?' — 'Go thou forth alone,
'Walk as a mortal through the dark Unknown,'
Replied the Voice, 'So shall the rest be free!'

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XLVIII

Thoughtful the Marut rose from fevered sleep,
And went abroad. The moon yet shone on high;
The dews fell softly through the summer sky;
He walked along the margin of the deep,
And drank the healing quiet of the time.
What saw he then, that made his pulses leap
With quick surprise? A stranded bark lay there;
A wreck, with naked ribs and timbers bare,
Drifted, perchance, from some far Scythian clime.

XLIX

Then came the light again into his eyes.
Homeward he went, and straightway summoned all,
By sound of trumpet, to the council hall:
And told them, thus assembled, in what guise
Deliverance might come. As yet, the isle
Had launched no sea-boat: let the great emprise
Be ventured now: let strong and willing hands
Follow, as type, the wreck upon the sands:
So might the gods upon their labour smile.

L

They answered with a shout that shook the dome,
As if with thunder. Then the work began.
From sunny slopes, and meads Elysian,
From lonely bays, besprent with ocean foam,
And dales, where summer's choicest blossoms shone,
Trooping they came, forsaking house and home.
So laboured they untiring, night and day,
And, ere two waning moons had passed away,
A fleet was ready, and the work was done.

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LI

Alas! ye lovely scenes, whose incense rose
Day after day, in silent orison,
Ye vales, and groves of palms, all overgrown
With trailing lilies, where the air was close
With scent of odorous gums, and passion flowers,
Your hour has come. Your ages of repose
Are now at end, and sudden ruin falls
On all the glory of your festivals,
And all the festal splendour of your bowers.

LII

With quivering earthquake pangs, as if it feared
To meet its doom, the island slowly sank.
The ships were crowded. Last upon the bank,
Stood Sanadon, who waved his hand, and cheered
His parting friends, and bade them all farewell:
'The sentence of the gods must be revered,
'And I remain, a willing sacrifice,
'That ye may live: And now, no more than this:
'Think of me sometime, wheresoe'r ye dwell!'

LIII

Then rose a sound of many voiced lament:
'Come with us, come! Thou who art all our own,
'Still lead us on! We may not go alone.'
But he, as one that changeth not his bent,
Remained unmoving, and with mournful eye
Looked round on all that sad environment.
His cherished ones were near: swift, to his side
Evanoè came, with words of love and pride,
'Bravest and best! Tis sweet with thee to die.'

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LIV

The heavens darkened: Yet the setting sun
Shed momentary splendour on the scene;
Where, with bowed heads, the Marut and the queen
Stood; with fair Thya and Eiridion
A pace or so behind. The maiden knelt
In silent prayer. The hero leaned upon
The mighty sword of proof, whose beamy ray
Now flashed a last farewell to light and day,
Ere in the depths below for aye it dwelt.

LV

So with the sound of thunder, and the war
Of elements, and horror of deep night,
The ocean waves, with floods of foamy white,
And sinuous arms, wide-curving from afar,
Whelmed in the deep the long, indented shore.
The darkness passed: the light of moon and star
Came forth again: and gentle breezes swept
The plain of waters: but Atlantis slept
Far down, in silence, to awake no more.

LVI

And they, the wanderers, who ventured forth
To seek a home beyond the unknown sea,
How fared they on their way? They lived to be
Forefathers of the mighty ones of earth,
Founders of worldwide realms, now vanished long.[14]
But still, to them, the island of their birth
Was always sacred, and its memory
Still lived, unfading, as the years rolled by,
A germ of legend, and a theme for song.

14 In many versions of the Atlantis myths, the descendants of the Atlanteans became leaders of various groups around the Mediterranean.

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LVII

Age followed age: great empires rose and fell;
But still Evanoè and Sanadon
Lived in men's thoughts, and ever urged them on
To deeds heroic: and there was a spell
To youthful warriors, in Eiridion's name:
And maidens wept to hear their mothers tell
The story of sweet Thya, young and fair,
Who passed from out the golden summer air
To icy death. Such was their meed of fame.

Notes

The story of Atlantis, or the Submerged Island, originating in the Timmæs and Critias of Plato, has been, at all times, a favourite subject for speculation and hypothesis. The writers on this theme are almost numberless.

In 1863, I read a paper before the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec (printed in their *Transactions*), in which I alluded to the position and language of the Basques, as affording some presumptive evidence in favour of the historic reality of the old Mythus.[15] I have had the pleasure, since, of reading a very interesting article on this subject by Leon de Rosny, in the *Mémoires de la Société d'Ethnographie*, Paris, 1875, in which he remarks that "la science, qui a longtemps relugue le récit du philosophe grec dans le domaine de la fable et du roman, tend à revenir chaque jour, de plus en plus, de son jugémènt trop severe et déjà plus d'un esprit sérieux, suivant lit trace d'Alexandre de Humboldt, pensu qu'il y a lieu de se préoccuper d'un mythe qu'à tort on a cru une fiction de la vieillesse de Platon." He goes on to say: "Ensuite il est à remarquer, comme l'a fait observer le savant doyen de l'Academie de Stanislas (M. le baron Guerrier du Dumast, de l'Institut—Nancy, 1868), qu'en parallèle avec les langues du Nouveau Monde qu'on a définies par le terme générique de polysynthétiques, se trouve, aux extrémités occidentales de l'Europe, l'idiome d'un peuple considéré comme

15 Fletcher refers to his paper "The Lost Island of Atlantis" (1865), which he originally read before the society on 6 May 1863.

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appartenant aux époques les plus anciennes de notre continent, le basque, dont lu polysynthétisme est également un des caractères fondamentaux."[16]

For the rest; where all is mist and uncertainty, these lines being merely an excursus into the realms of fancy, I have not hesitated to shape the island and its adjuncts rather in accordance with the more sober narrative of Aristotle and Diodorus Siculus than with the large proportions, and magnificent "encadrement," of the Platonic legend.

Notes for Stanzas [Fletcher's notes]

XXII. "A Marut." The Maruts, gods of the wind, are described in the Veda as Sons of Indra, and as shaking the mountains and overturning trees, etc.

XXX. "Salmydessus:" The name applied to the whole range of coast from the Thynian promontory to the mouth of the Bosporus

XXXI. In Siberia, during 1799, a mammoth was discovered in a perfect state of preservation, buried in the snow.

XXXII. et seq. The story of Prometheus, since the days of Æschylus, has engaged the attention of some of the foremost modern poets—Goethe, Shelley, Byron, Edgar Quinet, and also of the earlier Calderon.

16 The French scholar Léon de Rosny was the founder of the Société d'Ethnographie. The first quotation reads: "Science, which has long relegated the story of Greek philosophy to the realm of the fable and romance, tends to withdraw further each day from its overly severe judgment and previously more serious spirit, following the lead of Alexander von Humboldt, who thought there is reason to ponder a myth that one had wrongly thought to be a fiction of Plato's old age." The second is: "Then it is to be remarked, as the learned dean of the Academy of Stanislas (Baron Guerrier du [*sic*] Dumast, of the Institute [de France]—Nancy, 1868) pointed out, that in parallel with the languages of the New World that are generally defined as polysynthetic, there is, at the western edge of Europe, the language of a people considered to belong to the most ancient epochs of our continent, Basque, the fundamental character of which is polysynthetic." Julien Vinson made a similar observation about the Basque language in his "Mémoire sur l'Ethnographie des Basques," a paper delivered in 1872 and published in *Mémoires de la Société d'Ethnographie*, vol. 12 (1874): 49–103. Auguste-Prosper-François, baron Guerrier de Dumast, was a prominent member of the Académie de Stanislas, located in Nancy.

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XXXIII. Amrita (i.e. immortal, imperishable), the nectar conferring immortality.

XXXVI. Sindhu—the Indus. Manasa, a sacred lake and place of pilgrimage, encircled by lofty mountains and lying between Mount Kaitâsa and the Himalayas. It is frequently alluded to in Hindu poetry.

XXXVII. Hima (ice, cold, winter). Himalaya, the home of snow.

Aryâvartha (abode of the noble or excellent), the sacred land or place of residence of the Aryans; the name of the land bounded on the north and south by the Himâlaya and Vindhya mountains.

XXXVIII. Daitya (a son of Diti): a demon, an enemy of the gods.

The incident here introduced is adapted from an episode of the Mahabharata.

XLIII. I could not resist the temptation of bringing in our old acquaintance, Ulysses, the medieval type of wandering adventure and exquisite romance. Schiller speaks of him as "traversing all seas to find his home," but the illustrious Dante, with a finer instinct, pictures him as sailing forth upon the "alto mare aperto," actuated by his "zeal to know the world," "l'ardore ch'io ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto," (Inferno, canto XXVI.)[17] So also, in later days, Pulci, in the Morgante Maggiore, c. XXV.[18]

XLVIII. We all recollect the story of the Carthaginian ship cast ashore on the coast of Bruttii and serving as a model to the Romans, in the first Punic war.

17 "through the open sea" and as Fletcher renders in his own translation, the desire to learn the affairs of the world.

18 Luigi Pulci's (1432–1484) epic *Morgante Maggiore*, in which Ulysses also features for the Twenty-fifth canto.

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Additional Note by W., to whom the author entrusted the printing and editing of his work.[19]

In his notes on this Poem, Mr. Fletcher mentions the fact that scientific men of the present day incline to the opinion that the existence and submergence of an island such as Plato's Atlantis, is by no means inconsistent with what we now know of the world we live in. Elevations and depressions of the Earth's crust are known to have occurred and to be occurring; and the slight amount thereof in proportion to the Earth's size, which would suffice to submerge an Atlantis, is very remarkable, and admits of easy illustration. Let us take a terrestrial globe of forty inches in diameter; then, allowing the diameter of the Earth to be eight thousand miles, each inch of this globe will represent two hundred miles, and one mile will be represented by the two-hundredth part of an inch. Now, to get a tangible exhibition of this small quantity, let us take any printed book of which the edges of four hundred pages, when the book is close shut, will make one inch in thickness; that of each leaf (two pages) will be the two-hundredth part of an inch; and a scrap of such paper as the leaf is made of, if placed on the globe, will represent a mountain or table-land one mile high (5,280 feet), or two-thirds of the height of Mount Washington; and less than six thicknesses of such paper will represent that of the highest mountain, and not far from the greatest depth of the ocean. We shall thus have a fair idea of the comparatively small amount of the elevations and depressions in the Earth's surface, and of the very slight increase in them, respectively, which would drown whole continents or leave the bottom of the ocean bare.

Mr. Fletcher has explained that in the incidents of the story, where all is dark, he has ridden his Pegasus with a loose rein and strayed into the realms of fancy, where a strict observance of the unities and probabilities is not obligatory; and the reader will, I think, be satisfied that he has gained by this, and that if a Deity has been introduced in the person of the Marut, there was lawful poetic license for it, in the *digitus vindice nodus*, and the pathos, and beauty of the tale.[20]

19 This note is included only in the 1895 edition of the poem.

20 A mis-transcription of a Roman legal term "dignus vindice nodum"—a difficult knot to untie, a knotty problem, that was referred to the praetor for resolution.

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Nestorius: A Phantasy

1892

Nestorius the patriarch, the fourth in succession from Chrysostom, as bishop of Constantinople, was a native of Germanicia.[1] At first a cloistered monk, he afterwards became a presbyter of Antioch. At the invitation of the Eastern emperor, he assumed the patriarchate, A.D. 428. To the advantages of a fine voice and commanding person, he added an almost irresistible eloquence, and a mind richly stored with all the theological learning of the time. As a disciple of the Syrian school of Antioch, he had been taught to discriminate between the divine and human natures of Christ, and to abhor their confusion. The Virgin Mary was, to him, Christotokos, the mother of Christ, not Theotokos, the mother of God. Hence he was charged by his opponents with making two persons out of two natures, and thus denying the proper personal divinity of Christ.[2] The

1 This text appears in the original edition, on the page facing the opening of the poem. "Chrysostom" is John Chrysostom (c. 349–407), a prominent figure in the early Christian church, who was appointed Archbishop of Constantinople in 397. He is still widely revered as a saint not only in both the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Church but also in a number of Protestant denominations.

2 Fletcher refers here to the Nestorian schism, which turned on the question of whether a distinction can be made between Jesus as divine and Jesus as human—that is, on whether Mary can properly be called Theotokos, the one who gave birth to God, or is rather Christotokos, the one who gave birth to Christ Jesus. Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, upheld the conviction of the western Catholic Church that no separation could be made between the human and divine aspects of Jesus, who is at once both. Nestorius argued instead that Jesus is a person in whom both divine and human traits intermingle but are not fused. As Fletcher notes, at the Council of Ephesus (431 CE)—convened (like two previous ones) in an effort to unify Christian doctrine—Nestorius was condemned for heresy and exiled. The Church of the East continued to support him, however, and the Nestorian tradition

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Byzantine clergy, perhaps secretly displeased with the intrusion of a stranger, were in general bitterly opposed to the uncompromising rigidity of his doctrine; and after a long contest, marked by many vicissitudes, he finally succumbed to the jealous enmity of a rival patriarch, Cyril of Alexandria. He was condemned at the Council of Ephesus, deprived of this see, and banished. He died, an exile, in Egypt. His tenets spread widely in the East, and Nestorian communities are still to be found, partly on the Turkish, partly on Persian territory, in the wild and almost inaccessible regions of Eastern Kurdistan, and, on Persian soil, in the highly fertile plain to the west of the Lake of Urmia.

Nestorius

I

The old Nestorius, worn with many woes,
Cast out, an exile, from the haunts of men,
To all a stranger and an alien,
And seeking only silence and repose,
Passed to the sands of Egypt.
Day by day,
Wrapped in the splendour of the sunlit air,
Which vestured, there, a world so strange and fair,
He watched the mighty river glide away,
For ever passing, and for ever there.

II

Haply he found, in that mysterious stream,
Some semblance to the current of this life:
Placid, at first, it rose, and far from strife,
Cradled in lotus blossoms, with the gleam
Of dewdrops sparkling in the morning sun;
Then through the bare rocks of basalt, dark and grim,

survives today in the Assyrian Church of the East, now based in the Kurdistan Region of northern Iraq.

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Impetuous forced its way, with widened brim
Until, at last, its stormy life-course done,
It sank in silence. It was so with him.

III

All things had fallen from him. Where was now
The mitred patriarch, whose eloquence
Held multitudes enthralled in soul and sense,
With saintly aureole around his brow?
Where now the hierophant, what sate in state
So lately, on the throne of Chrysostom?
Gone, like a passing vision. He had come
To doubt his own identity. His fate
Had found him passive: and this was his home.

IV

So, like the ancient Sphinx, whose sightless eyes,
Sublimely sad, still front the lord of day,
Yet have no apprehension of his ray,
He turned to stone. To him the mysteries
Of earth and sky, of morning and deep night,
Passed as an idle show before his mind,
Leaving no trace or memory behind:
Amid all pleasant sounds, and shapes of light,
Hearing, he heard not—seeing, he was blind.

V

Like some huge hull, some battered quinquereme,[3]
Wrecked and abandoned on a lonely strand,
Or as some vanquished Titan, from whose hand

3 A large galley from the Hellenistic era that was used by the Romans, Greeks, and Carthaginians. As the name suggests, it was equipped with five banks of oars. The equivalent Greek term would be a "penteres."

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The bolt has fallen, and he sits in dream,
Half doubting whether all be come to end,
Nestorius sate, with lustrous silver hair
Falling in waves upon his chest, half bare;
As one whom no calamity could bend,
Too proud to mourn, too gentle to despair.

VI

Yet died he not, thus stricken; for at last
There came a voice amid the darkness singing,
There rose a flower amid the desert springing,
And airs of Eden o'er his spirit passed.
—It was a little maiden, from the shore
Of Araby, who here had found retreat:
She came, she saw him: and, with gesture sweet
Pressed to her lips the garment that he wore
And kissed his hands, and kissed his naked feet.

VII

Oh, fair and innocent eyes! Like those bright stars,
That wander softly through the summer sky,
And shed the balm of their serenity
On hearts slow breaking behind prison bars,
So fell your light on him. He woke, he rose,
With life new-throbbing in each pulse and vein,
Reacting from the tension of that strain;
He passed beyond the shadow of his woes,
Fronting the day, and was a man again.

VIII

With tears but half repressed, 'Who art thou, child?'
He said, 'and whence?' 'My name is Lois, sire,
'From Syrian Antioch; there, for shepherd hire,
'My father served, at first: then, to the wild

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'That lies about Mount Sinai, we passed;
'Where died my parents. Orphaned thus, I found
'A home among the herdsmen scattered round,
'And journeying with them westward reached at last,
'This lonely stream, that seems of earth the bound.'

IX

So were they friends. And every day, at morn,
When first the flush of dawning lit the sky,
And desert flowers exhaled new fragrancy,
She brought him luscious golden fruitage, born
Of broad-leaved trees, kissed by an eastern sun,
And led him forth, and shewed him all the land,
The shapes of stone, half hidden in the sand,
Sphinxes, and winged lions, gods, whereon
Primeval man had gazed with lifted hand.

X

The summer waned: the mellow autumn came;
Not, as in Northern lands, with rain and chill,
And low clouds trooping over holm and hill,
But cloudless, warm, with noon-day's ardent flame
Tempered to soft luxurious dreaminess.
The shadows lengthened somewhat, but no sign
Gave hint or token of the year's decline,
Save that the wavering films of heat grew less,
And deeper azure robed the hyaline.

XI

One morn, before the sun arose, the twain,
Leaving the palms which marked the river's way,
Rode forth into the vast, untrodden grey,
And lonely desert of the Libyan plain.
For many days, through the long hours of sun,

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They journeyed, and, when evening gemmed the sky,
They sat dismounted, holding converse high,
And so, each wrapt in Arab cloak, lay down,
To sleep, amid the lone immensity.

XII

Strange days were those! When all the visible world
Seemed limited to that pale disc of sand
Whereof they were the centre: all the land
Withered to dust, save here and there impearled
With tremulous and tiny desert blooms,
Shrinking, as if in loneliness and fear,
Beneath some sheltering rock. Yet even here,
A land of silence, as among the tombs,
The voiceless found a voice, the dark grew clear.

XIII

The invisible took form: the world unseen
Became reality; low whisperings
Came from the void: the beat of angel wings
Seemed always passing: and the dread serene
Out of its depths no doubtful answer gave
To those mute queries, which, as hidden flame
Consuming, from the questioning spirit came
The unsolved riddles of Trophonius' cave,[4]
Old as the world—in every age the same.

XIV

Then suddenly, the desert seemed to end:
A line of foliage, indistinct and dim,

4 To enter the cave of Trophonius was a euphemism for having a great fright. His name is literally to "nourish," and the riddle of his cave could be either its location or his difficulty as an oracle.

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Rose on the far horizon's hazy rim,
Whose darker shade at first appeared to blend
By soft gradations with the violet hue
Of recent sunset. Silent and serene,
The rising moon shed splendour on the scene,
Lighting its shadows, which, on nearer view,
Widened and grew, an oasis of green.

XV

It was a calm retreat, a place of rest,
A sanctuary, whose most welcome gloom
Pervaded everywhere by soft perfume,
And overhead in leafy richness drest
Refreshed and soothed the weary wanderer.
It stood amid the wilderness of sand,
An island of delights, a charmed land,
Where summer sweetness ever filled the air,
And all the woes of earth seemed ever banned.

XVI

Whereat Nestorius, gazing earnestly,
Exclaimed 'Our way is ended; it is well:
'When sleeping by the Nile, it so befell
'That heavenly visions, voices from on high,
'Came to me in a dream, at whose behest,
'I go to drive from this fair paradise
'The old, discrowned, Egyptian deities,
'Who hither fled, of empire dispossessed,
'What time a stronger faith began its rise.'

XVII

They entered in, the maiden and the sage,
Around them closed the tall columnar trees,
Giants in growth, through whose interstices,

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High-branched, with lofty crowns of foliage,
Clear moonlight fell, and chequered here and there,
The heavy gloom with points and lines of light.
Here slept they, through the soft autumnal night,
Till morning came: then forth they went to bare,
The secrets those recesses kept from sight.

XVIII

Over the scented sward, for many a mile,
Beneath the wavering and uncertain shade
Which hanging epiphytes above them made,
Through many a forest path and dim defile,
Skirting, at times, a lonely sylvan pool,
Whose argent surface, as a mirror clear,
Was starred with flowers, the fairest of the year,
Silent they passed; and through the vapours cool
Of deep ravines, where all was grey and sere.

XIX

So, at the last, when day was on the wane,
There rose before them, in the mellow light,
A palace, all of purest syenite,
Stately and vast, a Cyclopean fane:
Approaching then, they saw the long façade
Sculptured with forms of loveliness supreme,
Kings, priests, divinities—the splendid dream
Some Phidias of the desert might have had,
Sleeping, at noon, beside the sacred stream.[5]

5 Phidias (c 480–430 BCE) was one of the greatest sculptors of Greece in the classical era.

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XX

Here came of old, in weariness of soul,
The Mizrite Pharoahs: here at times they found[6]
A respite from the dull unvarying round
Of kingly state and sovereign control,
Here, in the summer heats, they passed the hours
Listening to the songs of bards, or to the story
Of some Ionian improvvisatore,[7]
Now perished all: for ruthless time devours
Alike the words of men, and ruins hoary.

XXI

The last who came was smitten in his prime
As if by lightning. Garlanded and crowned.
The wine-cup at his lips, his senses drowned
In all the witching rapture of the time,
He passed away. There came a rush of wind
From Libya's wastes, a blast of withering air,
Which found the feasters in their palace fair,
And sweeping on in ruin, left behind
The dead, who still seemed holding revel there.

XXII

They had not changed. So sudden was the blow,
So swift the shock of that invisible flame,
With such strange, subtle influence it came,
That they, through all the ages' ebb and flow,
Remained unaltered, fixed, without decay:
Each still retained his careless pose of yore.

6 By "Mizrite," Fletcher means Egyptian. In the Hebrew Old Testament, "Mizraim" referred to the lands of Egypt. Mizraim was the second of Ham's four sons, and it is from him that Egyptians were said to have descended.

7 An improviser of song, poetry, or story. Fletcher uses the Italian here to aid the meter of the line.

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Although the lotus wreath, which then he wore,
Had faded, by the lapse of time, away,
And lay, a speck of ashes, on the floor.[8]

XXIII

So, at the last, Nestorius laid his hand
Upon the massive portal. All the air
Was filled with golden splendour everywhere
And silence lay upon the charmed land:
No sound was heard save when the treetops gave
A murmured whisper, a faint orison,
A dirge of parting to the setting sun,
A wailing, as if Horus, in his grave,
Sank in the shadows of oblivion.[9]

XXIV

Through the half-opened door the light streamed in,
Revealing all that ghostly gathering,
Sitting as statues; and upon their king
The glorious sunshine fell, as if to win
The pallid phantom back to light and life:
Behold, he seemed to move! The rigid eyes
Relax and kindle with a quick surprise:
Is it a dream? Oh, help him in the strife,
Thou Amun-Ra! He must, he must arise.[10]

8 Early Christians used the lotus as a funerary flower to symbolize regeneration. This corresponds with ancient Egyptian tradition, in which the blue lotus of the Nile was a symbol of rebirth and fertility. In the tomb of Ramses II (which had been explored as early as 1817), there is an image of the god Horus seated on a lotus flower.

9 Horus is the Egyptian sky god and also the son of Isis and Osiris, whom Isis also raises from the dead after he is stung by a scorpion.

10 Amun-Ra is the Egyptian King of Gods and the Sun God.

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XXV

Vain phantasies: for as Nestorius gazed,
Filled with the dreaminess of solemn thought
Which that strange vision in his mind had wrought,
The daylight faded out. As one half-dazed,
He saw the shadows deepen on the wall,
The figures disappear, and all the room
Effaced and vanished in the twilight gloom,
So turned he, silent, from the regal hall,
And darkness gathered round the Pharoah's tomb.

XXVI

Night reigned. Beneath the shelter of a palm,
The maiden slept the starry hours away:
She joined her Syrian co-mates in their play:
Her soul—like some fair lake, whose holy calm
Reflects the flowers that grow upon its shore,
And when these fade, and pass away, and die,
Retains the fallen petals lovingly—
Lived o'er again the days that were no more,
Dreaming of home, and friends, and joys gone by.

XXVII

Not so Nestorius; awake he stood,
Watchful and waiting: not a leaf that stirred,
No breath of air, or fluttering of bird,
Escaped his ken, in all that solitude.
So came the noon of night: but e'er it past,
It seemed as though a judgment dealing wand
Were raised and broken, and a spirit-hand
Were beckoning: the hour had come, at last,
When those old gods should perish from the land.

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XXVIII

A roseate light, a faint and wavering glow,
Played round the circuit of the palace wall:
And sounds, half-heard, yet soft and musical,
Fell on the ear, with cadence sweet and low.
The portal-valves flew back, and from within
A beam of sudden splendour, dazzling bright,
Lit up, afar, the shadows of the night;
As when through clouds and vapours vespertine,
The star of evening breaks upon the sight.

XXIX

They work, they moved: up-starting from his throne,
Rose the dead Pharoah: and around him rose
The many who had shared his long repose,
Princes and bards and slaves: nor these alone;
From out the dark recesses of the wood
Came mighty shadows of departed gods,
Who lingered yet about their loved abodes,
Osiris, Nephthys, and the twilight brood
Of light and gloom; the spawn of Nilus-floods.[11]

XXX

Yet was their bearing kingly. Like a star,
Shone Ra, the sun-god, with his helm aflame:
Crowned with immortal youth, fair Horus came,
Typhon, arrayed in panoply of war,
The dread Anubis, from the shades below,
Judge of the dead, and, as lily fair,
Isis the Queen, with wealth of golden hair,

11 Osiris is the Egyptian god of the dead, and Nephthys is the sister of Isis, Osiris's wife.

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Yet something sad, as when the moon hangs low
O'er western hills, and silence fills the air.[12]

XXXI

All these, and more, in long procession wound
Along the alleys of the silent woods,
The ever-green eternal solitudes,
Where never sunshine came, nor storm, nor sound.
Forth, from their haunts, the forest Lemures[13]
Peeped, with the Larvae, starting back in fear,
To see the mighty concourse, and to hear
The chaunting of the Isiac votaries[14]
Faint floating up, attenuate and clear.

XXXII

Unfaltering in mien, Nestorius,
With white hair floating on his shoulders broad,
Erect in stature, as a Scythic god
Might stand amid the thunders ruinous
Of Lok and Hela,[15] in the latter days,
Advanced to meet the dread divinities;
When lo! a mist of darkness veiled his eyes,
—A moment only—then there met his gaze
A vision of long-vanished centuries.

12 Typhon was the greatest monster of Greek myth and the final son of Gaia but since Herodotus has been aligned with the Egyptian god Set, the embodiment of evil. Anubis is the jackal-headed Egyptian god of funereal rites, Isis was the wife of Osiris who reassembled him and resurrected him from the dead.

13 The spirits of the evil or vengeful dead in Roman mythology.

14 The religious worship of votaries bound to Isis.

15 Loki and Hel are Scandinavian gods. Loki is the shapeshifter who will turn against the gods during Ragnarok. Hel is the god who resides over Hel and receives a portion of the dead. The likely sources are the *Poetic Edda* and the *Prose Edda*. Fletcher had already studied Icelandic and Finnish myths and poetry by this time.

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XXXIII

The wood was gone: and in its place was seen
A sphinx-lined avenue, a street of stone,
Whose marble structures in clear sunlight shone,
Irradiating all the splendid scene.
White colonnades of far-receding length,
Colossi, obelisks, and pyla[16] fair,
Huge fanes, and broad-based pyramids, were there,
Temples that seemed eternal in their strength,
All bright and dazzling in the noon-day glare:

XXXIV

And down the highway, like the ceaseless course
Of some majestic river, swept along
A multitude past numbering, a throng
Of strange-clad, many-nationed worshippers,
Priests in rich panther skins and robes of white,
Princes urœus-crowned,[17]—and sceptred queens.
Brown Abyssinian girls, with tambourines,
Slaves, warriors in cohorts infinite,
Bejewelled Khita, and wild Hagarenes.[18]

XXXV

Far in the van, King Ramses Miamon,[19]
The lord of victory, the eagle-eyed—
A tawny lion stalked by his side—

16 Archaic plural form of propylaeum, the vestibule or entrance to a temple.

17 The French form of Uraeus, the upright cobra symbolizing pharaonic sovereignty over Egypt.

18 Both the Khita and the Hagarenes are competing tribes in Ancient Egypt.

19 Mostly likely Ramesses II (1303–1213 BCE) who won the battle at Aleppo, Kadesh (Qadesh). Amun was one of the four divisions of his army. Fletcher is likely drawing on the *Poem* and *Bulletin*, attributed to Ramesses II himself (see Gardiner's *The Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II*, 1960).

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Stood in his car and seemed to lead them on;
Still in his hand he held the mighty bow.
Which none but he might bend, of mortal men;
The quiver still he bore, whose arrowy rain
Showered death, like Amun's lightning, and laid low
The hosts of Syria, on Khadesh plain.[20]

XXXVI

Nor were the great gods wanting: round the king
They flitted, honouring their mysteries,
Vast, shadowy, indistinct, with gleaming eyes,
Like autumn clouds, storm-laden, menacing;
The while, on either hand, the street was lined
With Egypt's myriads, clustered thick as bees,
Through miles of colonnade and sculptured frieze:
So passed the throng, low-murmuring as the wind
That wakes to turbulence the slumbering seas.

XXXVII

Rapt in mute wonderment, immoveable,
Nestorius stood awhile, then raised his hand,
And uttered, in brief accents of command,
The words of power, the exorcising spell:
Whereat the vision vanished utterly.
Swift as the closing of an eagle's wing,
Night swallowed all that phantom-gathering,
And all was silent, save a mournful cry,
That lingered on, in echoes perishing.

20 Kadesh was an ancient city in Syria frequently the target of military campaigns by the Pharaohs.

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XXXVIII

Awakened by the sound, young Lois rose,
And saw the sombre shadows of the grove
Heavy with night, and saw the stars above,
And all the forest hushed in soft repose;
But that fair palace which was there before,
Massive, Titanic, with its sculptures rare,
Was gone, was vanished, and its place was bare. —
So was the mission ended: and once more
The twain moved onwards, through the moonlit air.

XXXIX

Back to the Nile! —Oh, fair and radiant river,
Who that has been beside thy shining stream,
And watched the splendour of the morning beam
On all thy thousand ripples' sheen and silver,
But turns to thee! Mysterious, mighty flood,
Traversing many climates, from the rime
Of Habesh mountains to the Delta's slime,[21]
Thou comest from thy southern solitude,
Rich with benedictions of all time.

XL

The cities wait on thee. The weary land
Crevassed and gaping with the summer drouth,
Prays but for thee. Thou dost renew its youth,
What time the villages like islands stand
Amid the swollen waters; and the hind
Greets thee as king and father, who dost turn
Darkness to light, and from Amenthe's bourne[22]

21 Habesh(a) is an Arabic name for Ethiopia, where the Blue Nile originates in Lake Tana.

22 Amentet is the Egyptian Underworld (hidden place). In *Of Isis and Osiris*, Plutarch renders the noun as Amenthes (§ 29; p. 73 of the Loeb translation), which is likely

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Preservest all, out-pouring, unconfined,
All chiefest blessings from thy sacred urn.

XLI

Within the twilight of a deep ravine,
The wanderers now held their homeward way;
A cleft profound, and where the light of day
Seemed, e'en at noon-day, scarce to venture in.
Slow passed the days, till wider grew the space,
And in its midst there rose a bubbling spring
With delicious sound of pattering,
Life-giving, cooling, in that lonely place
Set as a gem within an Ethiop's ring.

XLII

They rested here. Soft balmy slumber crept
Upon the exile, lying in the shade,
Worn out with travel, while the little maid
Sate opposite, and watched him as he slept.
Then, as it chanced, there came, to quench his thirst,
A mighty lion of the Libyan waste;
Towards the spring with stately mien he paced,
Till, seeing them, he stopped, amazed at first,
Then crouched, the while Nestorius he faced.

XLIII

Swift as the lightning from a summer cloud,
Sprang Lois to her feet, and rushed to where
The sleeper lay, and stood before him there,
Panting and flushed, and would have called aloud,
But that the sudden terror froze her tongue;

Fletcher's source. Fletcher is referring to Christ's harrowing of Hell, the recuperation of those who died before Christ's birth.

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So stood she, statue-like, with lifted arm,
As if to save and shelter him from harm—
A fine impersonation of strong will, yet young,
A child almost, with childhood's nameless charm.

XLIV

There was a pause. With half repentant air,
The great brute rose and slowly passed her by,
Retiring thus, in silent majesty,
As if he could not injure one so fair.
So went he to his realm, the wilderness;
And Lois, with removal of that strain,
Now that the hope of life seemed born again,
Fell to the earth, in mute unconsciousness,
Crushed as a lily in untimely rain.

XLV

She faded from that hour. No more the earth
Seemed pleasant to her: she was deaf to all
The revelry of life, the carnival
Of choral harmonies and songs of mirth.
A mist of sadness lay upon her soul,
Hiding the beauty of all fairest things,
The flush of morn, the glow that evening brings,
The clouds of sunset, and the stars that roll
Through azure depths, while soft the night-bird sings.

XLVI

Yet lived she many days. But when, at last,
The palm trees of the Nile appeared in sight,
She sank as one exhausted, pale and white,
As falls a flower before the winter's blast.
Then came to them a hermit of the plain,
Compassionate, who prayed they might abide

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Within his dwelling, by the riverside,
Until the maiden found her strength again,
And needful rest to both might be supplied.

XLVII

His hut was all embossed in fair flowers,
And shrubs of richest perfume, passing sweet;
For here, they said, had trod the sacred feet
Of Joseph and of Mary,[23] and the hours
Had shed bright sunshine of the mystic child
Borne in the arms of loving motherhood:
And Nature, in her happiest, holiest mood,
Had showered all blessings, in profusion wild,
And made a garden of the solitude.

XLVIII

So came the parting. In what better home
Could come the severance and sorrowing,
Than here where He, who took from death its sting,
And filled with light the darkness of the tomb,
Had dwelt, had lived in human infancy?[24]
And Lois watched the sun's declining ray—
Shine on the wall, and pass in gloom away,
And said 'My time is come: behold, I die;
'Yet would I speak with thee, while yet I may.'

XLIX

'Father and friend! I thank thee for the love
'Wherewith thou hast transfigured all my being,
'Lifting my heart to heavenly things, and freeing

23 The flight into Egypt from Matthew 2:13–23. In New Testament apocrypha, the palms bow to Jesus and the animals of the desert worship him.

24 The baby Jesus had lived in the hut during the flight from Egypt.

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'My soul to commune with the world above.
'Yet are there doubts that press upon my mind,
'Misgivings of fear that haunt me still,
'And lies upon me as a winter-chill;
'I turn to thee, oh father, and would find
'Comfort and guidance in this seeming ill.'

L

''Tell me,—when death is past, and heaven's door
'Is opened wide, to let the blessed in,
'—If I, too, am allowed a place to win
'Among the happy ones who die no more—
'How shall I fare when round me I see
'The multitudes of saints, the great, the strong,
'How shall I dare with them to pass along?
'I am so young, so small—I fear to be
'Lost and unnoticed in that mighty throng.'

LI

Weeping, the old Nestorius held her hand,
And whispered loving words of hope and cheer,
Whereat she smiled, and seemed to lose all fear,
As one who waits with calmness on the strand
Before embarking on an unknown deep.
The moonlight, like a watching presence lay
Upon the floor, a square of silvery grey,
And night-airs murmured, with Æolian sweep,
The maiden's dirge. —So Lois passed away.

LII

They buried her, and o'er her humble grave
Suns rose and set, the seasons went and came—
Her few short years of life, her very name,
Forgotten soon by all, e'en as a wave

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That rises for a moment, and is gone.
Yet, who can tell? Perhaps, the shade passed by,
She merged in light, and rose triumphantly,
To outlive Sirius and Oarion,
Crowned with the amaranth, no more to die.[25]

LIII

Darkened in spirit, stricken down by grief,
Nestorius sought again the ancient Nile,
And found beside its flowing, as erewhile,
A balm of consolation and relief.
Antæus-like, he touched the kindly earth.[26]
And felt the loving sympathy that lies
In Nature's mystic depths, and seemed to rise
With strength renewed, sending his spirit forth
To face, as man, the chance of destinies.

LIV

So died he. But before the summons came,
For many months, the dwellers in the vale
Pressed round him, listening, while he told the tale
He knew so well—so old, and still the same.
He raised them from the dust, and shewed them how
To worship worthily the common Sire;
Refashioning, with Promethean fire,
Their thoughts, their lives, until each wish and vow
Was harmonized with his, as lyre with lyre.

25 The stars Sirius and Orion. The herb Amaranth is associated with immortality in Greek mythology.

26 Antaeus was, in Greek mythology, the son of Gaia and Poseidon. He was unbeatable so long as he remained in contact with the earth. In this instance, Nestorius' strength comes both from contact with the earth and from focusing his spiritual concerns on the present circumstance.

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LV

To them, when came the final, parting hour,
It seemed the light had faded from their sky:
Bowed down, disconsolate, with wailing cry,
They kissed the hands now lying, void of power,
Folded and motionless upon his breast:
And sun-browned children of the desert bore
Bright lotus flowers, such as he loved of yore,
And shed them o'er him, weeping. So, at rest,
He lay, in silence, by the river-shore.

LVI

Uprose the morn; in splendour shone the sun:
A thousand ripples, on the mighty stream,
Woke laughingly, beneath his earliest beam;
Life stirred: a day of sunshine had begun.
But he, the sleeper, saw not, heeded not;
No more to him the river's stately flow
Could bring sweet music: he no more might know
The suffering by human partings brought,
Or man's unkindness. It was better so.

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POSTSCRIPT

Edward Taylor Fletcher

Sidney Ashe Fletcher

Edward Taylor Fletcher was the only son of Captain John Fletcher of the 72nd Regiment of the British Army. He was born at Canterbury, Kent, England, on the 20th May 1817, and came to Quebec, Canada, with his parents, in October 1827. For some time he attended the day school of the Rev. D. Wilkie, on Garden Street in this City, and later was sent as a boarder to the Laval University, where he received a classical education.[1]

After leaving the College he was articled to Mr. Hacker, one of the leading architects of Quebec City and assisted in the capacity of clerk and later as partner of Mr. Hacker, in the erection and completion of several of the larger buildings of the city.[2]

1 Daniel Wilkie (1777–1851) was a Presbyterian minister, born in Scotland, who became a pioneering educator in Québec, known for his staunch conviction that a broadly liberal education should be within the reach of all people. In addition to operating his school, he was an active member of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, serving as its president in 1836. Note that Sidney's use of the term "Laval University" is anachronistic, as the university was established only in 1852. He is referring to Fletcher's advanced studies at its forerunner, the Séminaire de Québec, in the early 1830s.

2 "Mr. Hacker" was Fletcher's cousin Frederick Hacker (ca. 1802–ca. 1846), born, like Fletcher, in Canterbury. He established himself as architect in Britain before migrating to Québec City in 1832, where he was responsible for designing, among other structures, homes for John P. O'Meara (in 1834) and William Sewell Smith (in 1835), both now heritage sites. In 1838, he and his newly trained cousin formed a firm called Hacker and Fletcher, Architects, Civil Engineers and Surveyors, which remained in business until 1841. For more information, see "Hacker, Frederick," Répertoire patrimoine culturel du Québec,

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In 1834 he had an attack of the Asiatic cholera which was then raging in Quebec. He was carefully nursed through it by his mother, but she herself was stricken with the disease and died while he was still confined to his room. She was buried on the 1st August 1834, in the St. Matthew's Church burial ground on John's Street.

His partnership with Mr. Hacker having expired, he began to study for examination as a land surveyor and was for some time engaged in the field with survey parties, in the new districts being then opened up. When the Papineau Rebellion in 1837 broke out and all ordinary business was suspended, he obtained a commission in the Quebec Engineer Rifles, one of a number of the regiments organized to assist the authorities in keeping order. He drilled and did guard duty during most of the winter of 1837.

When conditions became normal, he completed his training in the field and secured his commission as a surveyor in 1841, from the surveyor-general, Thomas Parke.

In 1846 he married at Montreal, Henrietta Amelia Lindsay, daughter of William Burns Lindsay, Clerk of the Legislature for Lower Canada.[3]

He was the first secretary of the Board of Examiners for Upper Canada, being appointed to that position in April 1842 [*sic*], but only held that position for one year when he received the appointment as secretary of the Board of Examiners for Lower Canada and removed to Quebec. He resided at different times in Montreal, Kingston, Ottawa and Toronto, but went to Quebec after Confederation and lived there until 1882 when he was superannuated.

His official duties included, inspector of surveys for the Province of Quebec, [*sic*] required him to visit nearly every part of that Province during his term of office. He had the entire confidence of his Department in his ability and

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n.d., accessed 8 October 2021, https://www.patrimoine-culturel.gouv.qc.ca/rpcq/detail.do?methode=consulter&id=8549&type=pge.

3 Henrietta's father, William Burns Lindsay (1796–1862), was the son of William Robert Lindsay (1761–1834), who served as clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada from 1808 to 1829. Following his father's retirement, William Burns stepped into the role, where he remained until the Assembly was dissolved in 1838. After serving as clerk to the interim Special Council, in 1841 he was appointed clerk of the Legislative Assembly of the United Province of Canada—the position he would have occupied at the time of Henrietta's marriage. He continued in that role until his death, in 1862. At that point, his own son, also named William Burns Lindsay, was appointed to the position, where he remained until 1867, when he became the first clerk of the House of Commons.

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judgment in matters connected with the profession which is well set out in letters from Messrs. Andrew Russell and Joseph Bouchette, both gentlemen in the high ranks of the profession of that date.

One important duty he had charge of was the retracement and remarking of the inter-provincial boundary between Lake St. Francis and the Ottawa River in 1859 and 1860. He also carried out extensive surveys in the outlying districts around Lake St. John and the Saguenay country and in the eastern townships of Quebec.

Upon his retiring in 1882 his valedictory address to his friends and confreres is interesting and is evidence of the character of the subject of this sketch and the comments of the Press at that time were indeed very complimentary.

His retirement from active official life after long and faithful service of forty years meant a complete change of habit of every-day life, but he had many other activities of mind and brain. From early boyhood he had been fond of studying and devoted some part of each day to his textbooks. He had acquired a knowledge of Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek and Latin and spoke and wrote fluently French, German, Italian and other modern languages.

During his residence in Toronto, he was president of the Toronto Literary Association for several years and on his leaving that city in 1858, he was the recipient of a very complimentary, engrossed address from the officers and members of that association, making him an honorary member. The next year, he was an officer of the Civil Service Library Association in Quebec that formed a reading room above Sinclair's Bookstore on John Street. He was also, for many years, an active member of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec and an officer of the Society by 1841—he continued donating to the Society until 1892, years after his relocation to British Columbia. He frequently addressed the Society on different topics of which he was an ardent student, such as languages, "The Twenty Years Siege of Candia" in 1863, "The Lost Island of Atlantis" in 1868, "Notes of a Journey Through the Saguenay Country" in 1871, "Notes of a Voyage to St. Augustine on the Labrador Coast" in 1877, "Mark System of the Ancient Germans" and "On the Sanskrit Language and Literature."[4]

He also wrote a poem of some length and elaborated on "The Lost Island of Atlantis" and another one entitled *Nestorius*, both of which were highly thought of by his friends.

4 Sidney's dates are incorrect here, and the last two addresses were not published.

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He suffered the loss of his wife in 1868 and was left with seven children, four sons and three daughters.

During his residence in the City of Quebec he saw many changes of personnel in the Survey Department and many important works and improvements carried on in the city and suburbs, including new Parliament Buildings outside St. Louis Gate.

In 1887 he went to British Columbia where his sons, with their families, were comfortably settled, living for some years with his eldest son, Everard, at Victoria, going later to New Westminster. He was still active and alert, and keenly interested in all that went on around him, enjoyed good health and was much pleased with the climate and conditions of British Columbia. At New Westminster he had a severe attack of "la grippe" from the effects of which he never recovered, and he passed away on 1 February 1897, at the age of seventy-nine. He was buried in the Church of England Cemetery at Sapperton.

He was at all times a kind, considerate and patient father. Of a retiring disposition, he lived quietly and simply. He was friendly and courteous to all with whom he came in contact.

He ranked among the first in his chosen profession and was well-known as a scholar, littérateur and poet. He was a true Christian gentleman.

In his person he was of medium stature, about 5 feet, 6 inches, well built, muscular and active. His hair, which had turned white in his youth after a very severe illness, grew closely thick on his head and was of very fine texture, his lips and chin were clean shaven, his side whiskers closely trimmed. His eyes were of a peculiar blue colour, piercing and bright. His eyesight was very good, he used glasses only when he was reading or writing in an artificial light.

He was fond of music, and played fairly well on the violin-cello, usually on Sunday evening when the house was still. I have listened often to him as I laid in bed half asleep.

He was a man of little commercial instinct, always careful in his dealings with his fellow men. He accumulated a large library of books dating back to his early college days, until he retired from active service. He was very methodical in his habits and kept a diary of daily happenings.[5]

5 It appears Fletcher's diaries were burned by his sons at Cecil Fletcher's insistence, although this is uncertain. The surviving two volumes of his commonplace books and the limited remains of his library are held in the Special Collections of the McPherson Library.

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