

# Philip Henry Gosse's account of his years in Newfoundland, 1827-35

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## DOCUMENT

# Philip Henry Gosse's account of his years in Newfoundland, 1827-35

RONALD ROMPKEY

FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS OF the nineteenth-century Newfoundland fishery usually take the form of travel books. Characteristically, they concentrate on the feudal existence of fishermen and feature feats of bravery and strength that uphold the mythology of hardy Anglo-Saxonism. Rarely do we have the opportunity to observe the fishing culture through the conventions of autobiography — even more rarely from the viewpoint of the counting house, with its precise young men in clean clothes, earning a regular wage and spending their leisure time in genteel pursuits. The reminiscences of Philip Henry Gosse (1810-88) provide such a viewpoint. Gosse arrived in Carbonear from Poole in 1827, indentured to the firm of Slade, Elson & Co. His reconstruction of events forty years later allows us to peer into the lives of the clerical staff ashore in Carbonear and observe at the same time the awakening of a distinguished naturalist.

Gosse's duties at the counting house left him so much time to devote to natural history that when he left Newfoundland in 1835 and bought a farm north of Compton, Sherbrooke County, Quebec, he was able to write his pioneering work on the entomology of Newfoundland, which remains unpublished. In Quebec, he found subsistence farming hardly more hospitable than the life he had just left. But in 1839, after another year of schoolmastering in Alabama, he wrote *The Canadian Naturalist* (1840) on the basis of his observations in Lower Canada and established himself securely

in the scientific world. In all, he wrote over forty books and pamphlets and over 200 articles on religious and scientific subjects, making himself perhaps the most prodigious popularizer of natural history in mid-Victorian England, especially in the fields of invertebrate marine biology, ornithology, rotifera and lepidoptera. In 1856, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society.

But Gosse also published widely on religious matters. In him we also observe the growth of an intellectual seeking to accommodate science to religion, sustaining his belief in Creation against the most overpowering evidence to the contrary. In *Father and Son* (1907), his son Edmund portrays him as a man subsequently narrowed by his rigidity and inevitably trapped at the crossroads of the great religious/scientific debate begun over a century before. When Darwin's theory of evolution was whispered about prior to the publication of *The Origin of Species* (1859), the elder Gosse greeted it warmly, then shrank from it and offered a theory of his own that would explain the mysterious appearance of fossils. In *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot* (1857), he offered the theory that God had somehow created all living things with all the marks of a pre-existent state. Such a conclusion, reached through strenuous ratiocination, changed his life. Edmund Gosse tells us:

In truth, it was the logical and inevitable conclusion of accepting, literally, the doctrine of a sudden act of creation; it emphasised the fact that any breach in the circular course of nature could be conceived only on the supposition that the object created bore false witness to past processes, which had never taken place. For instance, Adam would certainly possess hair and teeth and bones in a condition which it must have taken many years to accomplish, yet he was created full-grown yesterday. He would certainly — though Sir Thomas Browne denied it — display an *omphalos*, yet no umbilical cord had ever attached him to a mother (120-21).

The younger Gosse offers this information as the epitome of his father's religious fanaticism. He portrays his arrogance as tragic, for his father had expected the theory to bring the whole controversy to a close and unite Christians and atheists in some dramatic way. Instead, both sides rejected it as ludicrous. Philip Gosse had not been prepared to depart from biblical tradition and admit the possibility of some other explanation, and he never recovered from the consequent damage to his reputation. A heavy gloom settled upon his life.

During the following years of increasing religious rigidity, he began his autobiography but abandoned it after he had reached the end of his early years in North America. In the pages printed here, we have a fragment of that autobiography, written after several decades of scientific energy and bearing a hint of lingering intellectual self-justification. Local customs, local politics, and local characters appear in the background mainly as novelistic detail, while Gosse concentrates primarily on his strenuous reading and

collecting, his religious devotion, and his accomplishments. If he had continued it, we would now have his version of one of the most important intellectual debates of the nineteenth century. But once confronted with his own ineptitude, it appears, he found the recollection of his humiliation too painful to contemplate.

The text is based upon a manuscript in the Cambridge University Library, Add. ms 7017, ff. 1-204. Clearly intended as a draft, it rambles entertainingly through the circumstantial details of everyday life without regard for what Gosse calls the "moral or logical connexion" between them. Yet by so doing, it acquaints us with his sensitivity, his self-consciousness about his family's poverty, his puritanism, and his intellectual interests. Part I begins with his introduction to the social customs and business practices of Carbonear, the rituals of the fishing industry and the processing of seal pelts. In Part II, he describes a sojourn of several months in St. Mary's on behalf of the firm and a trek across the barrens of the Avalon Peninsula from St. Mary's to Carbonear. In Part III and Part IV, he takes up the amusements of the "clerkly" circle. He begins the serious study of Newfoundland birds and insects, poetry (but not the Romantics), European politics, and the movement for the formation of a Newfoundland legislature, eventually granted by Britain in 1832. And in Part IV, interrupted by his brief return to England, he relates what he considers to be important turning points in his young life: his devotion to natural history brought on by the purchase of Adams's *Essays on the Microscope* (1798), the consciousness of his literary abilities, and above all the religious conversion that set him on a course of "decided separateness from the world." In the closing pages, he expresses his fear of an Irish uprising in the colony but does not disclose the extent of the disturbances going on around him. Finally, the promise of a farm in Canada encourages him to leave Newfoundland, a "cold, barren, unproductive region" inhospitable to the naturalist.

Although passages from the reminiscences already appear in Edmund Gosse's *Life of Philip Henry Gosse F.R.S.* (1890), the Newfoundland portion of the work has not been published extensively before. Here it appears in its entirety, with the exception of memoranda and repetitive or parenthetical sequences that depart from the main narrative line. The elimination of a whole passage is marked by three asterisks. Certain other interesting phrases struck out by Gosse have been retained and appear with a line through the text. I have followed the sometimes erratic spelling and punctuation exactly, except in cases where inconsistencies obscure meaning. Gosse's footnotes, which he has marked with an asterisk, have been incorporated into the text in parentheses. My own annotations and emendations appear within square brackets. I thank Ann Thwaite for advice on the Gosse papers and Iain Bruce for assistance with locating and translating Latin quotations. I thank Gordon Handcock and Shannon Ryan for advice on the history and economics of

the fishing industry. I am also grateful for the cooperation of the syndics of the Cambridge University Library and for the permission of Jennifer Gosse, Philip Gosse's great-granddaughter.

Anecdotes and Reminiscences  
by  
Philip Henry Gosse

[Part 1] 1827. Newfoundland

“Nos patria fines, et dulcia linguimus arva;  
Nos patriam fugimus.”<sup>1</sup>

On the 22nd. of April, 1827, a Sunday morning, when the loved & left ones at home were preparing to go to meeting, I went down with a rather heavy heart, to join the Brig “Carbonear”, then lying at Stakes. We presently got under weigh for the town of Carbonear, in Newfoundland, after which the vessel was named. Her commander was one William Andrews, an old grizzled, weather-beaten salt, well informed, kindly, hearty, ready in anecdote & repartee, a worthy man, if rough. Johns, the mate, was a great unwieldy, lurching Cornishman, who afterwards was promoted himself to command vessels; 1st. the Schooner “Plover”, in which I made my passage round to St. Mary's in August, 1828; & 2nd. the Brig “Elizabeth”, which he lost by bumping her full against the iron cliffs of Ferryland, in a fog. He was a man of herculean size & strength, but as such men often are, peculiarly quiet & inoffensive.

I had three fellow passengers. There was a lad, Luke Thomas, 2 or 3 years younger than I, going out to the house in a similar capacity; a light-hearted, mercurial lad, who notwithstanding his youth, knew a great deal more of “life” than I did. Phipard, the sailmaker of the firm, was going back to his employment after a winter's holiday spent at home. And there was also a young German gentleman, a Mr. Oehlschlager from Hamburg, who was going out to establish a mercantile connexion in St. John's.

Thus, with a muster of six at the cabin table, we were a lively party enough: & my sense of depression at parting from home was very transient. As soon as we were fairly out in the Channel, the exposure to the long roll of the Atlantic turned me sea-sick; but this lasted only for a couple of days, & on the third morning, with a bright, cheerful sun, and a tolerably quiet sea, I was quite well, & felt no more sickness for this voyage. I was surprised at the sense of security I felt on board, & which appeared normal, & a matter of course, even in rough weather; quite different from what I had expected beforehand. The surface of the vast ocean too was occasionally of a glassy smoothness, like a mill-pond, without even any perceptible swell; & this I recollect recording as an unexpected & noteworthy fact. On the other hand we had our share of rough weather, & one or two tempests. In one of these, I remember, standing on the upmost step of the Cabin stairs, sheltered by the “Companion”, not venturing to stand on deck, all heeling over as the vessel was, I watched with mingled admiration & awe the vast billowy hills of water that rolled away from the steep sloping deck. But here again reality corrected my imaginings: the phrase “mountains high”, so frequently applied to waves, had led me to [expect]

a much loftier elevation of their summits than I saw; while the broad vastness, & the sublime majesty far exceeded expectation. Occasionally, we shipped some heavy seas; & one of these came plunging in like a cataract, while I was on the quarter-deck. It knocked me down, & washed me away to the opposite side of the deck, amidships; where I picked up myself, not a little astonished.

I soon learned to mount the rigging, & take up a pleasant place in the main top; delighting to sit & read there, in the warm sunshine, with all the turmoil of the ship so far below. The first time I essayed this feat, however, I had to "pay my footing"; for one of the sailors ran up quickly after me, & tied my legs with an end of spun yarn in the rigging, till I promised to stand treat a quart of rum for them; worth 1s/3d.

I found that I could write & even draw without any difficulty on board, in fair weather; and so I went on with my volume of *Quadrupeds*, which I had begun before I left home. Of these I painted two on each 8vo page, one above & one below; the whole series was finished soon after my arrival at Carbonear, when they were sent home, & Mother had them half-bound for me by Lankester. It was while engaged in this work, that I suddenly found the power of stippling; or, to use my Father's phrase, "working-up", to my great delight. The art seemed to come to me without any effort, quite suddenly.

I kept a copious Journal for the use of the loved ones at home; making coloured drawings of everything that was depictable; as Whales spouting; Porpoises leaping & playing; Petrels, Boatswains, Hagdowns, & other birds; Portuguese Men o' War (*Physalia*), of which we encountered several; Ice-bergs; Cape St. Francis from seaward; &c. All this, though I doubtless chronicled small matters, was good exercise for me, both of pencil & pen.

\* \* \*

During this voyage I most scrupulously obeyed my Mother's injunction to read my Bible daily. There was no opportunity for retirement, and I had to brave publicity. My young shipmate Luke Thomas, however, was the only one who took any notice; & he counselled me "to get rid of that sort of thing, as that wouldn't do for Newfoundland." However I persevered, both in this practice, & in that of (the form at least of) secret prayer before bed; & never relinquished either, as a rule, till, five years later, God was pleased to give me decision for Himself. I have much reason to be thankful for this habit: I had no marginal references; but as I read continuously, I made marginal references for myself; & this greatly helped my knowledge of the letter of Scripture, and moreover added a zest to the reading. Bickersteth's "Scripture Help",<sup>2</sup> which had been given me as a parting token of love by a Mr. John Brown, I also read diligently, & found instructive & profitable.

It was while I was on board this vessel that my change to puberty took place; marked by the usual deepening of the voice, which was not attended by any perceptible "breaking", or falsetto squeaking, which is the frequent concomitant of the transition.

The brig *Carbonear* was a poor "tub" of a craft, for sailing qualities; we had a large proportion of westerly winds; and our voyage was consequently long, extending to nearly seven weeks: whereas, the distance has been accomplished, & that by a sailing vessel, in seven days! The prevalence of fine warm weather, the society on board, & the buoyancy of youth, together with the faculty of observation, exercised on so

Novel a field as the sea, prevented me from feeling much of the tedium, which the inordinate length would otherwise have produced.

At length, on the morning of Wednesday, the 6th. of June, a long line of dim blue, ending in a point, was seen stretching across the horizon in front of us. This we were told was Newfoundland, & the point was Cape St. Francis, the eastern boundary of Conception Bay, to which we were bound. All that day it continued to occupy the same position, for there was very little wind; but we had decidedly approached it by evening. A grand ice-berg of large dimensions was also in view; which, while we were gazing at it, majestically changed its balance, & turned about one third over, causing an immense turmoil in the sea, & a swell for some time afterwards. It seemed by no means an inappropriate sentinel to guard the approach to these icy shores.

The next morning, on our going on deck, Cape St. Francis lay behind us, & we were bowling along with a fair breeze, up the ample & beautiful Bay of Conception, with Carbonar ahead, as yet quite indistinguishable from the general contour of the land. We got into the harbour in the afternoon (the 7th. of June 1827, after 46 days' passage); & I was agreeably surprised by the first sight of the town from on board. It was a much more considerable place than I had expected to find; the number, continuity, & respectability of the houses; the crowd of shipping, including the fleet of about 70 schooners, not yet departed for Labrador; the small boats hurrying to & fro; the multitude of cries, of the sounds of artisans at labour, & of various other noises; — all was very different from the desolation, which I had in my uninformed imagination, associated with Newfoundland. It was early summer too; fields, & gardens, & potatoe-patches, mapped out the sides of the hills, which like an amphitheatre sloped down to the harbour; and verdure was smiling everywhere, even to the dark environing fir woods.

Boats always come off, to any vessel that arrives, with clerks from the various mercantile houses, for letters, friends of the captain & passengers, &c., even long before she reaches her anchorage. My brother William was one of the first; he had kindly drawn up a code of regulations for my behaviour, on matters of deportment & etiquette, in the novel circumstances in which I should find myself. These I scrupulously observed, & proved them judicious & valuable.

I was immediately put under Mr. Apsey, the storekeeper, for a week or two, till the Labrador-men were gone; and then took my place in the Counting house, en permanence. Luke Thomas was assigned to assist Mr. Lush in the shop, where he remained. The shop was restricted to the sale of drapery, clothing, & the finer kinds of groceries, &c., while all the coarser kinds of goods, as salt, oil, molasses, biscuit, cordage, iron ware, leather, were under Apsey's supervision, in vast barn-like buildings, called discriminately "Stores", and collectively, as a department, "the Store."

The Counting-house, or Office, as it was indifferently called, was pleasantly placed, in the midst of a large garden, in front of the dwelling-house. Four clerks were the complement, who occupied the four sides of two double desks, much as in England. Newell was the bookkeeper, a married man, native of the island, tolerably well educated, & tolerably agreeable. Next to him, as "copyer", was Jno. Durell, a natural son of a Poole merchant; he was a quiet, gentlemanly, kind, but somewhat reserved young man, much liked by all. Then came William Charles St. John, a lad

of about 20 years, a native of Harbour Grace, where his parents lived, with whom he spent his Sundays. He deserves, and must have, a much more careful, a much more elaborate portraiture.

Charley, as we familiarly called him, was the son of a worthy old gentleman, an Irish protestant, who bore the historic & venerable name of Oliver St. John. In Hume's Hist. of England,<sup>3</sup> I found that an Oliver St. John was Solicitor General under Cromwell; &, recollecting that my friend had been fond of referring to the St. John\* (\*The profligate & infidel Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke) to whom Pope addressed the Essay on Man,<sup>4</sup> as of his family, I wrote last summer asking him if he is descended from the former. In his letter of May 18th. 1868, he says, "Directly or collaterally, I have no doubt that I am. The St. Johns and Cromwells were related & connected, by consanguinity & affinity. My father always spoke of Cromwell as his Cousin. St. John my ancestor went over to Ireland in Cromwell's army, & had a portion of land in Tipperary given him as an estate: the adjoining estate was that of Bradshaw, another friend of Cromwell's. Those estates continued intact in the time of my Great-grandfather, James St. John, an officer in the time of Queen Anne. I have his commission as Lieutenant, signed at Barcelona by John Duke of Argyll, Commander in Chief of Her Majesty's forces in Spain." In this letter my friend goes on to give many more interesting details of his ancestry & Kindred, to which it may suffice to refer. The proof is abundant that he is a "jontilman, every inch of him".

All this, however, came out long after. As I saw him, Charley was a youth of manly height, with features of the Grecian type, exquisitely chiselled, formed in a very aristocratic mould, to which an aquiline nose of unusual dimensions gave character. A mouth of feminine smallness; a finely cut chin; a lofty forehead; dark eyes & hair; the latter copious, & rather crisp than lank, completed the physiognomy of my new acquaintance; which was continually animated & lighted up by such smiles, & by the frolic wit & merry repartee which his prolific brain was constantly forging. I saw in him a new type of character; he was a fair sample of the Irish youth at his best, ~~when undebauched by Popery.~~ Sarcastic and keen, ready in reply, unabashed, prompt to throw back a Rowland for every Oliver,<sup>5</sup> full of fun and frolic, as ready at a practical as at a verbal joke, possessing a strong perception of the ludicrous side of everything, cool & self-possessed, already a well-furnished man of the world, St. John presented as great a contrast as can well be imagined to me. I was thoroughly a greenhorn; fresh from my puritan home & companionships; utterly ignorant of the world; raw, awkward & unsophisticated; simple in countenance as unsuspecting in mind; the very quaintness of the costume in which I had been sent forth from the parental nest told what a yokel I was. A surtout coat of snuff-brown hue, reaching to my ankles, & made out of a worn great-coat of my Uncle Gosse's which had been given to Mother, enveloped my somewhat sturdy body; for I was

"Totus, teres, atque rotundus;"<sup>6</sup>

while my intellectual region rejoiced in the protection of a *white* hat (forsooth!) somewhat battered in sides & crown, and manifestly the worse for wear. Such was I in outward guise: the idea of a witticism or repartee, made hot on the occasion, had never entered my noddle; but then, had I not in my chest those manuscript pages of stale jests, which I had toilfully copied out of the Joe Miller,<sup>7</sup> with which I expected to take captive the laugh of the office? What wonder that I became immediately the butt of so keen an archer as St. John, the inviting centre about which



the flashes of his sparkling wit constantly coruscated, until at length, by the very inhalation of the atmosphere, I learned gradually to play the same game, & to pay him back with his own weapons?

Intellectually, I think we were pretty much on a par. We were both readers, but possibly I had read more books than he; I had learned Latin at school, he French; my slight knowledge of natural history was balanced by his acquaintance with Chemistry, mainly acquired from Parkes's *Chemical Catechism*,<sup>8</sup> which I had been used to see at John Brown's. But then he was a poet; at least he had the art of versification, which, however, he chiefly exercised in semi-doggerel, Hudibrastic, satirical pieces. A poem of his was extant when I came, on the Methodist Missionary Meeting of the preceding autumn, a merry lampoon on the preachers, & most of the people of the place, on the occasion of their gathering. It was very smart & telling; & entertained us greatly. A few disconnected stanzas & isolated lines of it I still remember. It began thus:

The Union flag is lower'd half-mast:  
The time approaching very fast,  
    When all the town must meet.  
The busy Preachers skip along;  
The little boys around them throng,  
    In hopes to get a seat.

Now to the door the crowd arrives,  
Compos'd of sisters, brothers, wives,  
    And Uncle Johnny Pike:  
Here's old Phil Tocque, just like a whale,  
Or like a mountain under sail;  
    So call him which you like.

Here's Billy Thistle, from South Side,  
Two daughters stinking loud with pride,  
    And one with goggle eye.  
Here's William Wilkinson and dame,  
George Ozzard, and the next that came  
    Was Collins and Joe Guy.

These last-named worthies were artisans on our premises, who were known to have a sneaking kindness for the aforesaid daughters, whom indeed they afterwards married. Of course the pungency, the Attic salt, of the whole, lay in allusions to little peculiarities, which could be appreciated only at the time & place.

I was more thoroughly conversant with grammar than he; and this became one of our stock subjects of discussion. He had dabbled a little in philosophy, of wh. my simple mind knew nothing. His favourite poet was Pope, whose *Essay on Man* he was continually citing, perhaps because it was dedicated to St. John, its opening lines running,

Awake my St. John, leave all meaner things  
To low ambition, and the pride of Kings.

The philosophy of this poem, such as it is, formed another of our staple subjects of discussion. His mode of thinking was somewhat loose, dashy, indefinite; mine,

on the other hand, precise, microscopic, according to rule. Withal, he was lithe and active in bodily exercises, a skilful & much admired skater, a vigorous swimmer, a good leaper and runner. He possessed, too, an inexhaustible fund of good humour, was a jovial boon-companion on occasion; and, to crown all, a great favourite with the ladies, being handsome, gallant, attentive, with a fluent, flattering tongue, ready wit, & a good store of frivolous conversation, the small talk wh. is the spice of life, & means nothing.

I have endeavoured to draw a full-length portrait of W.C. St. John, not only because we became knit in a warm friendship which has lasted through life, but because he had very much to do in moulding my own mind. At last, our two minds grew very much together, in the daily, hourly, momentary companionship of several years of budding manhood. We walked together, read together, discussed & disputed together, on every imaginable subject, “*de omnibus rebus, et quibusdam aliis*,”<sup>9</sup> joked together, & spent our time in a never-ending series of intellectual combats, so that the Counting house was an arena of constant mental gladiatorship between us two. Newell bore his part occasionally; Durell but little; Charley & I were the standing contenders. Whatever of humour or wit in conversation I possess; whatever of keenness in argument; whatever of logical precision of thought; whatever of readiness of speech or power in debate; I largely owe to those years of companionship.

Apsey and Lush, the other officers who came under the denomination of gentlemen, dining constantly at the table where Mr. Elson himself presided, we did not mingle much with. They were both from England, each fifteen or twenty years my senior; staid men, taking precedency next to the book-keeper, thus; Newell, Lush, Apsey, Durell, &c. Lush was prim and formal, a sort of old beau; all the time I knew him dancing attendance on the pretty daughter of a neighbouring planter of wealth, to whom he never had courage to make proposals. Apsey was of a much ruder type; rather rough in person, sailor-like in costume & manners, hot-tempered, & then abusive, profane in language, & profligate in morals; yet merry, jovial, kindly, and what is called a “good-fellow.” Such was George Apsey then, but long before I left, he had become a meek, holy, zealous, consistent Christian.

Mr. Elson, the resident partner, was a Unitarian gentleman, originally from Exmouth; already grey when I knew him first. He was thoroughly a gentleman in education, manners, and general bearing; studious & bookish; reserved in manners; somewhat cold & distant towards us individually, though now & then delivering himself of a stately jest to us collectively, as when assembled at the dinner-table. Thus, when a round of beef was before him, he would tell us that the Rev. Mr. Ashburner (who was Mr. Durant’s predecessor at Poole) said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a round of beef; it is ‘cut and come again’.” Or, in winter, when the salted cod was the staple dish, the worthy skipper would retail for the hundredth time, a joke of one Parson Zaalter (i.e. Salter) of Devonshire, who would say, with affected modesty, to his friends proposing to send him dried cod from Newfoundland, “I don’t care how smaall tha be, if tha do cut out in laarge slijces,” (or the broad, muscular flakes). And then the Skipper would archly insinuate, how the old fox well enough knew that none but a large fish wd. yield large “slijces”; & proceeding to divide the fish before him, would say, “Ah! this is a fish of Paason Zaalter’s sort.”

Mrs. Elson was an Irish papist, of low manners & no education. We understood that she had been a pretty girl; & that Mr. E. had had some discreditable liaison with

her, & had been frightened or inveigled, by her uncle, one Dr. Donogan, a strong-willed, tyrannous old fellow, into marriage. This, however, was matter of tradition. A family of eight children, three boys & five girls, were growing up, of whom the eldest son, William, was in a merchant's office at Leghorn, & the two elder daughters Jane (17) and Mary (16) were just budding into womanhood.

There were two dwelling-houses; viz. the Upper House, where the family resided & where Mr. E. slept, & the Lower House, where we unmarried clerks slept & boarded, & where Mr. E. took his meals with us, and spent the day, going up home about 11 P.M. He always breakfasted, however, with his family.

The Lower House, a large, but low structure of wood, now old & ramshacked, bore on its front a sun-dial, which faced the counting house. Immediately before this front, & running along its entire extent, was a raised platform of board, sometimes known as "the Gallery", already so old and rotten, as in a year or two to be replaced by a similar one of hard gravel. On this platform it was usual for all the officers to assemble, as well as the captains of ships in port who were free of Mr. Elson's table, when a lofty bell was rung, which was the signal for dinner, at [blank] o'clock.<sup>10</sup> Here they would walk to and fro, engaged in friendly converse, until the man-cook appeared at the door, & announced that dinner was carried in.

Our bed-rooms were barns of places, destitute of carpet and curtains; the unpainted wood of the walls & floors being black with venerable age. Whatever of bedding was required was supplied by Lush from the shop, without any supervision from Mr. E., & we slept warm enough. We made our own beds; did for ourselves whatever of sweeping was done, for no servant entered our rooms. The urinal was disguised under the euphemism of "looking-glass"; more commonly, however, it bore the appellation of Jordan.\* (\*An old English appellation. "They allow us no Jordan, & so we leak in your chimney; & your chamber ley breeds fleas like a loach." — Shakespeare.)<sup>11</sup> This we ourselves emptied at night, going out by the front-door (for there was no other) to a sink at the end of the platform.

We youngsters usually performed this needful operation, "jerking the Jordan", as we called it, together; one calling to his fellow next door, through the partition, "Are you ready to jerk your Jordan?" & going down in a little troop. Curious contretemps would sometimes occur; the young ladies would perhaps have been down, spending an hour after tea with their Father; and just as we chaps, loud babbling, were passing in to the lighted hall, with our emptied Jordans in our hands, the parlour door would open, & out would come the dainty ladies full-butt upon us. And then what a shuffling! what efforts to conceal that which would not be concealed! what a turning tail & precipitate flight out into the darkness, & hiding until the danger was gone! Shamefaced enough were we the next time we met the girls; but they were kind & discreet, & never, of course, seemed to recollect that they had seen anything unusual the night before.

On Sundays there were three places of religious assembly; 1. the Popish chapel, attended by the great mass of the working classes who were Irish, as also by Mrs. Elson & (sometimes) her daughters; 2. the Established Church, a small edifice supplied in the afternoon by Rev. John Burt, who came over from his parish, Harbour Grace, for the purpose: this was attended nominally by the chief merchants, the clerks, & the English portion of the working classes; 3. the Methodist Chapel, which vied with

the Popish in the fulness of its attendance, gathering, on Sunday mornings & evenings, all who were not papists. Mr. Elson rarely attended any religious service.

On the first Sunday afternoon, feeling much at a loss for occupation, I went boldly into the parlour, & asked Mr. E. to lend me something to read. He was very kind, asked me what I would like; & when I left it to him, he took down from his book-closet [Walter] Scott's *Fortunes of Nigel*, [Charles] Lamb's *Essays of Elia*, & another, "Wine & Walnuts," I think; all these of which I took, & eagerly ran up into my own room. The latter two were not much to my taste; but the novel, the first of Sir Walter's that I ever read, I eagerly devoured. I do not think I went to meeting that evening. The principal persons in the town had formed themselves into a Book Society, of which I presently became a member, & continued so all the years I remained in Newfoundland. It was a very great benefit. Mr. Elson was librarian; & the Books were kept in a closet in the parlour, to which, as it was unlocked, we had free access at breakfast time, and frequently on Sundays, when we could feel tolerably secure of not being disturbed. There was an annual meeting of the members in the parlour, at which new books were voted in. There was rarely however any opposition; I proposed a good many from time to time; but the choice was mainly left to Mr. E. himself, who then procured them from England. At certain intervals the Library books were sold by auction among the members. Several that I now possess I purchased on these occasions; as the vols. of [the] *Library of Entertaining Knowledge*, *Popular Zoology*, *Knapp's Journal of a Naturalist*.<sup>12</sup> Of course there was the usual large proportion of novels, of wh. I became a great devourer. We had, sooner or later, most of Scott's, Bulwer's, [Fenimore] Cooper's, the "O'Hara" series, [John] Galt's, and others which I cannot now recall. Many works, too, of biography, travels, geographical discovery, history, natural science, poetry, & belles lettres, we had; so that it very fairly represented the literature of the day. Most of us young men at Elson's were readers; whereas those at Pack's [Gosse, Pack and Fryer], (where my brother William was) & the other mercantile houses, had little pretension to a literary character. This made a marked distinction between us & the other clerks of the town, and we kept considerably separate; though of course we occasionally met them in our walks.

To one of St. John's letters I am indebted for a record (perhaps just a trifle coloured by his imagination, but bearing many marks of *vraisemblance*) of one of my very earliest walks. It must have been within a week of my arrival. Says my friend:

"One of my first experiences with the 'old white hat' was an evening's walk on the most delectable of all turnpikes, Carbonear beach, where the surf-worn stones spread themselves out so invitingly to one, like yourself, but recently recovered from rheumatism in the feet. Bad as is my memory, I remember the heads of our confabulation. You told me about your school curriculum under one Charles Henry Sells (I think), & of a further polishing-off under a Unitarian minister.\* (\*The accuracy of these minute details, notwithstanding some omissions & mistakes, agreeably surprised me, after 41 years, as they show that my friend is drawing from real memory, not from imagination. The whole incident has totally faded from my recollection.) You had begun the French and had made some considerable progress in Latin. As I knew nothing of the latter myself, I felt flattered that I shd. have a classical scholar for my companion, & wasn't at all unwilling that the street-passengers should hear us conversing in an unknown tongue. So I asked you to repeat some Latin verses, which you did very readily, ever & anon, however, stopping to rub your toe or ankle,

as those outlying members would receive damage from the treacherous stones. Your favourite poet appeared to be Virgil; and I hear you now going measuredly and with admirable ore rotundo and emphasis over the old Roman's Bucolic:

Sicelides Musae, paullo majora canamus:  
Non om — (oh! psha! my toe! hop, hop, hop)  
Non omnes arbusta — (ankle turns: limp, limp)  
Non omnes arbusta juvant, humil — (pscha!)  
- - - - humilesq[ae] myricae:  
Si canimus sylvas, sylvae sint Consule dignae!<sup>13</sup>

The last line was brought out with great oratorical power, as being 'eminently beautiful'; to which I assented without hesitation; requesting you, over & over, to repeat it, perhaps half a dozen times before we reached the bridge; and always with an eye to have you spouting the incomprehensible language just as somebody — it might be only Johnny Dunn the cooper — was passing. But the naughty beachstones sadly disturbed my calculations, & the audience was sure to pass in the midst of a parenthesis; thereby rendering the limping sufferer anything but an object of envy or admiration. I have picked up a little Latin since; and many & many a time have those lines recurred to me — with all their concomitants of 'pscha! O dear!' &c. &c. as well as the glowing expression of countenance at the inimitable —

'- - - - silvae sint Consule dignae.'

"On this memorable occasion you discovered that I knew a little about French, and had dabbled somewhat in Chemistry, & you were prepared to assure Pack's chaps that I was not such an ignoramus as they took me to be.\* (\*The fact was, 'Pack's chaps' were very much in awe of my friend's wit & powers of sarcasm. For his candle was not hid under a bushel.) I think it was this evening that, on our return to our chambers, you produced a voluminous compilation of Joe Miller anecdotes in ms., many of which you read to me, taking care to look grave on reaching the point, lest it should be thought (as I took it) that you knew no better than to laugh at your own (compiled) jokes!" (Lett. 3. May 25. 1868)

\* \* \*

The predominance of the Irish element was quite a novelty to me; & as I saw it mainly in the lowest classes, the broad brogue was very conspicuous and disagreeable. There was also a wonderful abundance of mongrel dogs; & after dark, in walking through the town, one & another of these nasty curs would run out yelping at our heels at every few yards; in the most threatening manner. They were, however, as cowardly as they were vociferous; for the mere stooping as if to pick up a stone was enough to send them skulking back to their shelter in silence. I was standing one day on Harbour Rock (an elevated spot about half-way down the harbour, & a very general resort, as a terminus to a moderate walk), with my brother William, two or three of the captains, & two or three of the clerks from the lower firms, among whom was one Moore, a very quiet, gentlemanly young man, bookkeeper to one of the smaller firms. I was voluble, & supposing that I was quite safe in the presence of none but Englishmen, I thought to deliver myself of a witticism. One of them asked me how I liked Newfoundland. "I see little in it", I said, "but dogs & Irishmen". The silence that followed, where I had expected approving laughter, told me that

something was wrong. At length William said, "Do you know that Mr. Moore is an Irishman?" I was very much abashed; stammered something about my not suspecting that fact. One of the captains good humouredly said, "O, Moore may take it as a compliment, as it shows he has nothing in his manner to distinguish him from an Englishman." Moore himself was kind, took no offence, & so it passed off.

I had but given expression to a deep feeling, which everyone in the company felt much more than I could yet do; Moore, certainly not least. For Moore was an Ulster Protestant, whose antagonism to the papist Irish was even stronger than ours. It was not exactly Irishmen, but Papists, that really constituted the anti-English party in Newfoundland; & whose rancour & insolence were soon to grow, under priestly teaching, to formidable dimensions. Already there existed in the Protestants of the Island, far more oppressively felt than ~~habitually~~ openly expressed, an habitual dread of the papist Irish as a class; & an habitual caution in conversation, to avoid any unguarded expression, which might be laid hold of by their jealous enmity. It was very largely this dread that impelled me to forsake Newfoundland, as a residence, in 1835; & I recollect saying to my friends the Jaqueses that "when we got to Canada, we might climb to the top of the tallest tree in the forest, and shout 'Irishman!' at the top of our voice, without fear."

About a fortnight after my arrival, my brother William left Carbonear for a summer's holiday in England, returning to his employment in Pack's office in the autumn. Thus I had little intercourse with him; & by the time of his return, my new friendships & habits were established, so that we never were much more than on terms of ordinary acquaintance.

Mr. Elson likewise left about the same time, for the same destination; not having seen his partners for several years. He too returned in October. Mr. Newell the bookkeeper was left as locum tenens during the skipper's absence, & he took his place as head of the dinner table. Thus my first summer was one of great freedom. From the middle of June, when the schooners sail for Labrador, to the end of October, when the crews have to be paid off, & all accounts are settled, there is always very little work to be done in the Counting house, & fortunately this was the most enjoyable time of the whole year; the Newfoundland summer being very delightful. Jane & Mary Elson would now & then come down from the Upper Ho., & chat & flirt with us in the garden wh. surrounded the Counting house. A day or two after my arrival I had met Lavinia Pack in our shop, whom I had not seen since I had met her with my cousins at West Street a couple of years before. She was now grown into a most beautiful woman; & presently became the ~~best~~ beauty of Carbonear, a town which was by no means deficient in very pretty girls. She cordially held out her hand, saying, "How do you do, Henry?" Jane and Mary Elson were with her, & so they began to call me "Henry"; but Mr. E. always called me "Philip"; in the office, of course, I was plain "Gosse", & everywhere among my equals; except when to be distinguished from my brother, when it was invariably "Philip Gosse."

On Sunday afternoon, I was ensconced in the parlour book-closet, when down came trooping from the Upper House, Mary Elson, & two or three little girls, her sister & cousins. They all came in at the open parlour window, which was little more than knee-high, & we were chatting together, when one of the children espied old Dr. Donogan coming up the lane, towards the house. They were all very much afraid of him, & knew that he would rate them if he found them there. So out they all

scampered through the window, except the youngest cousin, a child of 5 or 6 years old. In trudged the great unwieldy bear, and seeing only me & the little girl, both looking very conscious, he immediately jumped to the conclusion that I had inveigled her there for an unworthy purpose. No doubt it looked very suspicious, for we were both standing in the room, looking frightened, with no tokens of play, or reading, or any other occupation visible. He instantly, without making any inquiries, opened upon me in abuse, of which I can recollect, only, the words, "You're a rascal, Sir!" over repeated. I knew what he meant; but partly terror, & partly a chivalrous reluctance to commit Mary Elson, who evidently had not wished him to know that she had been there with me, prevented my offering any explanation; & the old tyrant presently taking little Mary Dalton by the hand, led her away. I suppose he got the truth out of her, for I never heard any more of it; and he was as civil as usual when next I came into contact with him. Apology, from the like of him to the like of me, was of course out of the question; perhaps, however, it was with some thought of the amende honorable, that he prophesied my future greatness, in a communication to St. John, of which if I knew anything at the time, I had utterly forgotten it till the following passage occurred in one of my friend's recent letters. "You don't (I am sure you can't) forget old Donogan (Med. et Phil. Doct.), who used to say, 'That Misther Gosse has a noble appairance: he'll be a great man one of those days'." My friend adds a touch or two to the old chap's portrait: "I was in the habit of mending pens for him, & when he tried them on a sheet of letter-paper in the office, beside me, he had such a contempt for the English language (which he termed gibberish) that he wouldn't write down a word of it, but would try his pen with — 'quenquam ta mane' — 'Yes, Sir, that's a good one': then, 'Sic transit glo — ' — 'And that won [sic] will do; though it's rather thick'; &c. &c." (Lett. 3. May 25. 1868.)

We used to laugh at the old Dr's peculiarities in the office, — I don't mean before his face; — he was much too awful for that; — he was reported, occasionally, when his niece Mrs. Elson offended him, to exercise his abusive tongue upon her, & expose circumstances of the past, which in our eyes robbed her of a trifle of that halo of dignity, which she possessed as the lady of our venerated skipper. "Ugh! indeed!" the voluble old tongue would blaze out, "is it the dirty little Ally, that I couldn't keep away from the sodgers [soldiers] in Watherford? that dhirty little Ally!" He was intensely Irish, with a quantum of hedge-school learning grafted on his Hibernian bigotry & conceit. He would say for example, " 'Sennacherib', you say: no, Sir, it is 'Shân-a-crib'; that means, 'John of the big fist': and this proves, Sir, that the Bible was originally written in Irish." And this verdict given, not as a joke, but pronounced with all emphasis & earnestness. He was the favourite Doctor of the low Irish population, who had an unbounded idea of his learning & skill; the two other practitioners of the place (one of them also Irish & a papist) not being worthy to hold a candle to "*the Dochter*"; & this not the less (perhaps all the more) because the stout stick which he always used, he would unhesitatingly bring down with a whack! whack! upon any one of their backs, upon the very slightest provocation. At last — not long before I left the Island — the old man died: & strange to tell, his servant man, one John Wright, utterly uneducated & ignorant, who had never been anything better than a shoe-black & waiting-man in his master's days, was encouraged to dub himself "Doctor Wright", & actually numbered a considerable portion of his late master's subscribers on his books. For every fisherman is expected

to have some Doctor or other, who for a guinea subscription is bound to attend him in sickness; & this guinea is regularly charged by the clerks in the office, at settling time; the question, "To which?" being the only one submitted to the fisherman. In some mysterious & inscrutable way, the mantle of Elijah was supposed to rest on Elisha, and the magical skill and therapeutic power of the late Doctor had doubtless been found in the surgery, & appropriated by his valet.

The girls used to send down to the counting-house to have their pens mended; & they presently got to choose me in particular, telling the messenger to ask Mr. Gosse, if within, "because he makes such nice pens". Mary did a little in the way of drawing; and soon after my arrival, she wrote me a note, asking me to lend her certain colours, which she named. As I have said before, I did not possess a single cake of colour; nothing but atomic fragments from Father's box; so I was obliged to write back, saying that I had not any of those she had named, but volunteering the information that "they could nearly all be obtained by mixing"; of which I gave examples. To tell the truth, I had been used to the utmost economy of what I did possess; & I was rather chary of letting my precious fragments go into a young lady's hands; being pretty sure that they would come back to me, well soaked, besmeared, & wasted, even if I were so fortunate as ever to see them again at all.

Parties were frequent, but they were almost always "balls". The clerks of the different mercantile firms were of course in demand, as being almost the only young chaps with the least pretensions to a genteel appearance. Jane Elson one day sent me a note, inviting me to a forthcoming "ball". I had never danced in my life, & so was compelled to decline. Her note began, "Dear Henry"; and I thought it was the proper thing, in replying, to begin mine with "Dear Jane". Having my note in my pocket, I gave it to her, as I met her and Mary in the lane, just below the platform. Lush, who had seen the action, benevolently took me aside, and told me that "it was not etiquette, to write a note to a lady, & deliver it myself"; — at which I again felt much ashamed. This ignorance of the art of dancing caused me to refuse all the parties, & very much isolated me from the female society of the place. I do not doubt that this was really very much for my good, & preserved me from a good deal of frivolity; but I rebelled in spirit at it; & murmured at "the puritan prejudices" of my parents, which had not allowed me to be taught the elegant accomplishment, which every Irish lad & girl acquires, as it were, instinctively. I supposed it was absolutely impossible to join these parties without having been taught; though, in truth, such movements as sufficed for those simple hops, would have been readily acquired in an evening or two's observation, under the willing tuition of any of the merry girls. William, indeed, as I afterwards found, went to them, & acquitted himself *comme il faut*; though he had no more learned than I had. However, I believe I had somewhat of the "puritan prejudice" myself, at least conscience was uneasy on the point, as I had been used to hear balls classed with the Theatre.

My familiarity with the Elsons never proceeded farther than a making of childish signals with my candle at night. My bedroom window looked across the meadow towards the Upper House, in front of which was the bedroom window of the girls. We used to signalise to each other, holding the candle in the various panes of the window, in turn, in response to each other. There was no ulterior meaning attached to the movements, it was mere child's play. They certainly began it; for I am sure I should not have ventured on such a liberty myself. Apsey, however, took greater



freedoms; for if he were on the platform, waiting for dinner, when they happened to be coming down the meadow to go into the town, he would waylay them at the end of the platform (which they were obliged to cross) & not suffer them to pass, till each had paid him the toll of a kiss. It was readily yielded, & though they affected to frown, & said, "Mr. Apsy is such a tease," they were evidently not much discomposed, & bore him no malice, being of a forgiving disposition. The toll was taken with full publicity, in presence of us all, some of whom envied him his impudence, and success.

In truth, Jane Elson became the unconscious object of my first boyish love. Before the autumn of this first season had yielded to winter, I loved Jane with a deep & passionate love, all the deeper because I kept the secret close locked in my own bosom:

"He never told his love;  
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Prey on his damask cheek."<sup>14</sup>

The chaps in the office used to rally me about Mary, who was indeed much the prettier & more vivacious of the two; and I never undeceived them; but Jane was my flame. One night I awoke from a dream, in which she had appeared endowed with a beauty quite unearthly, & as it were angelic; so utterly indescribable, and indeed inconceivable, that on waking I could only recall the general impression, every effort to reproduce the details of her beauty being in vain. They were not so much gone from memory, as from the possibility of imagining. There was in truth no great resemblance in the radiant vision to Jane's homely face & person; yet I intuitively knew it to be her. ~~Is there not in this some faint foreshadowing of the powers of the disembodied spirit?~~

My unconquerable bashfulness precluded my ever hinting my love to Jane. A year or two afterwards, I was at a "ball" at Newell's; the only one which I ever attended; and the Elson girls were there. It was customary for the fellows each to escort a lady home: I asked Jane to allow me the honour: she took my arm; & there, under the moon, we walked for full half a mile, and not a word — literally not a single word — broke the awful silence! I felt the awkwardness most painfully; but the more I sought something to say, the more my tongue seemed tied to the roof of my mouth.

This boyish passion gradually wore out: I think all traces of it had ceased long before I visited England in 1832. About a year after that Jane married a young merchant of St. John's named Wood; and Mary accepted one of the small merchants of Carbonear, one Tom Gamble, in June 1836.

Some of the more wealthy "planters" had pretty daughters; and their houses were centres of attraction to the clerks, who often would look in to take tea and spend the evening; & were always welcome. One of the most hospitable of these houses was that of James Legg, a planter of ours, whose eldest daughter, Fanny, was the most fascinating girl of the place — decidedly the town belle. St. John occasionally took me thither; but I never had courage to go alone; so that it was not often I was there, & never at any other house. It is strange, that though Fanny Legg was the cynosure of wondering eyes to all, and an universal toast among the young fellows, & though she was a nice, genial girl, prudent & of irreproachable deportment, she

did not become the object of serious courtship; though her father was known to be a man of wealth, & the most perfect freedom of intercourse was allowed with the family, she continued without a lover as long as I remained in Newfoundland. William tells me that she married at length, but it was with some insignificant person, and certainly after the bloom of her early youth had passed away.

The term "planter" needs explanation. It has no connection with the cultivation of the soil, though doubtless inherited from colonies where it had that meaning. With us it designated a man who owned a schooner, in which he prosecuted the fisheries; viz. that for seals in spring, & that for cod in summer. In Carbonear, a town of some 2500 inhabitants at that time, there were about 70 such planters, whose dealings were distributed amongst the mercantile houses of the place. I have before me now, given me by my brother William, a list of the names of 74 schooners that sailed from Carbonear to the seal-fishery in 1837, with their respective owners, & the merchant with whom each dealt. Of these 74, 17 were fitted out by Slade, Elson & Co., 21 by Gosse, Pack & Fryer, and 19 by Chancey; the rest by the smaller houses. At that time, however, our house had much decayed; & Chancey's had grown: in my early days, perhaps 25 each for our firm & Pack's, would have been about the real state of things.

In general, business was carried on upon the following terms. The mercantile firm having a house in England, as well as one in Newfoundland, imported into the island, from various ports in Europe & America, all supplies needful for existence & for the fisheries; the country itself producing no provisions, except fish, fresh-meat, oats, & culinary roots & vegetables. The planter was supplied by his merchant, on *credit*, with everything requisite, the whole produce of his voyage being bound to be delivered to the house. The planter shipped a crew averaging about 18 hands to each schooner, who (in the seal fishery) claimed one half of the gross produce, to be divided among them; the other half going to the owner, who in most cases commanded his own vessel. The names of the crew having been registered at the Counting-house, each man was allowed to take up goods on the credit of the voyage, to a certain amount, perhaps one third, or one half, of his probable earnings, of which we, the clerks, were judges. For these goods, both planter and crew applied at the office, seriatim; & got tickets, or "notes", for the several articles, which they then took down to Lush or Apsey, whose business it was to deliver the goods, filing the notes, which, in the evening, each of them copied in a day-book in the office; this job, in the busy season, often extending late into the night.

The details of the seal-fishery, I have described in my "Introd. to Zoology", i. 110; and the details of the actual voyage are delineated very graphically, by Mr. Jukes, from personal observation, in his "Excursions in Newfoundland", i. 250-322.\*<sup>15</sup> (\*There is, in my possession, an Engraving, after a drawing of my Brother, of the Harbour of St. John's frozen over, & the vessels cutting out in order to sail for the Ice.) Preparation of the vessel, shipment of the hands, &c. begins early in February, & on the 1st. of March, the crew is bound to "come to collar". As a large number of these live in the outlying coves & settlements of the North Shore, there is, at the period just named, a very marked augmentation of the population, & this of the most active, the most noisy, the most rude, & the most disagreeable sort. For a fortnight, it was a sort of purgatory for us clerks, who were besieged by these vociferous & fragrant sailors, all day long. By Patrick's day (17th. March)

it was a sort of point of honour for all to have sailed; & thence, till the middle of April, when the fortunate ones began to return, we kept a sort of holiday.

Then, again began a press of work; for the seal-pelts brought in were delivered in late, & all the accounts incurred had to be settled; amounts due to the successful crews to be paid them, partly in Cash (i.e. [Newfoundland] currency; the Spanish dollar = 4/2 sterling, passing for 5/- [currency])<sup>16</sup> & partly in goods, which involved more notes. The planters' accounts, too, must be squared; the profit or loss on the voyage of each determined.

By this time May was far advanced; & now all was hurry, almost exactly a repetition of that in February & March, to prepare for the Cod fishery. The same schooners, with the same commanders, but with new crews (at least newly selected, though often consisting of the same men) were out-fitted, on exactly the same system of credit as before, with the same bustle. By the middle of June, all had sailed for Labrador, where they remained catching & curing fish, till October, when they returned with their produce. This interval was, as I have said, nearly a four months' holiday for us, & in the most delightful part of the year. For the work in the office was little more than routine, such as copying letters, keeping the joint accounts of the residents who dealt at our shop and stores, despatching two or three vessels to England with the Seal oil rendered from the spring collection, & the business connected with what is called the Shore fishery. In the coves round about, & especially along the "North Shore" (that is, that coast of Conception Bay which stretches north from Carbonar to Point Baccalao, an iron-bound, precipitous shore, much indented with small coves, but containing no harbours for ships) resided a hardy population, chiefly English and Protestant, who possessed no schooners, but small sailing boats, with which, mostly in families, they pursued the cod-fishery in the Bay. The fish were in general of larger size, were better cured, & commanded a higher price than the Labrador produce; but it was taken in only limited quantity. Many of the North Shore men were tall, well made, handsome fellows, remarkably simple, inoffensive & guileless, with a considerable aversion to & dread of the Irish population of the Harbours, to whom they afforded, in their speech & manners, objects of current ribaldry. In the spring, as they had no resources at home, the Northshore men shipped with the planters for the Ice; & after the 1st. of March, when the crews "came to collar", every evening the harbour was resounding with shouts and cries, & responses, banded from vessel to vessel, consisting very largely of nicknames, opprobrious epithets, & stale, ribald jokes, of which the poor meek men from the Northshore were the subjects. Their dialect was peculiar; it had no approach to the Irish brogue, & was sufficiently diverse from that of the English peasantry: one of its traits was the inability to pronounce our *th*, which invariably became *t* or *d*. Many of them were converted men belonging to the Methodist Society, of which they were worthy & respected members. Fond of the Wesleyan Hymns, as all Methodists are, it was amusing to hear them mutilating some favourite hymn, such as

"De ting my God dut hate,  
Dat I no more may do;"

yet interesting withal to mark the fervor of spirit with which it was recited.

With these simple people our summer business was mainly occupied, they bringing up their little boat-loads of excellent fish, according as it was cured, with

other subordinate matters occasionally, as perhaps a supply of fresh salmon for the house table, various kinds of wild berries, as cranberries, whortleberries, & other species of *Vaccinium*, “bake-apples” as the exquisitely delicate cloud-berry (*Rubus chamaemorus*) is locally called, & such like, always welcome, & always saleable. Occasionally, but not often, I have known a carcase of reindeer venison brought down, nearly as large as a cow, the meat of which is juicy, well-flavoured, & altogether excellent. Such minute transactions as these, however, hardly broke our holiday, & altogether the office work of these 4 summer months would have been by no means oppressive, if performed in one.

In October, the harbour gradually filled again; & as the 31st. of this month is the terminus of every engagement, no sooner did that much hated & dreaded day arrive, than we were beset by the clamorous rogues, a dozen or more crowding in at once into the office, all shouting, swearing, disputing together, dirty & greasy, redolent with the commingled fragrances of fish, oil, rum & tobacco; one vociferating in the richest Milesian brogue that a pair of hose charged in his account never went upon *his* legs, showing the said legs at the same time as a proof that he did not have the stockings four months before: another affecting great indignation, because the usual charge of one shilling for “Hospital” (Greenwich) appeared.<sup>17</sup> “Fat for shud I be chargged with Hospital, whin meself niver had no horse, nor no spittle naythur?” — another finds the balance of cash due to him rather less than his vivid imagination had anticipated; & he ramps & tears about, swearing that he won’t touch the dirty money; that the clerks may keep it; that he doesn’t care two pins for the clerks; & so forth; but presently cools down, pockets the cash, signs his beautiful autograph in the receipt book, & walks silent & crest-fallen away.

The hottest press of this settling business does not last through November; at least the crews, the utter plebs, are pretty well done by that time. But as the year approaches a close, books have to be wound up; long planters’ accounts to be copied; ample inventories of all stock in the various stores & shop to be taken & copied; various statements to be drawn up for transmission to England; long letters to be transcribed; & general arrears in many branches to be made up; so that winter is pretty busy.

The prices charged on account varied little: in general they were about double what they cost in England; that is, nominally, but the difference between sterling & currency must be borne in mind. To residents in the town, who paid cash over the counter, prices were considerably less. We clerks had all our goods charged to us at the actual Invoice prices, to which 25 per cent. was then added: and all the Cash we had drawn, was at settling time turned into sterling, & the difference allowed to us.

I cannot with any certainty recall what were the exact terms of remuneration for my six years’ engagement. But I think it was something like the following:

1827 —	£10	
1828 —	15	
1829 —	20	
1830 —	25	Total £140.
1831 —	30	
1832 —	40	

Rather small wages: but then board & lodging were found me. Washing, however, I had to pay myself; & an incident connected with this charge occurs to my recollection, illustrative of my economy.

It must have been in the summer of 1829, that I had been a little exceeding my income, & Mr. Elson had evidently his eye on my account. One little item brought matters to a crisis. There suddenly appeared in the ledger against my name, "2 ozs. Cinnamon, 1s/-". This I had got at the shop, to chew as a little luxury: but the skipper noticed it; & suo more, said nothing to me, but gave orders to Lush, that Philip Gosse must have nothing more without a note from him. Soon after this, my laundress applied to me, through her usual messenger, a buxom daughter, for some goods on account, for which I, suspecting nothing, gave her a note in my own name. This note was dishonoured: & a few days later, old Mrs. Rowe herself applied to Mr. E., who comes with her into the office. It so happened that I did not recognize her, having generally done business with one or other of her daughters, & I took no heed whatever to what she and Mr. E. were talking about, the chief of the discussion having doubtless passed before they entered the Office. Mr. E. at length gave her the note she asked in my name, & she went out looking daggers at me as she passed. The Skipper presently retired also, saying not a word to me; & not till then, did I, through St. John's raillery, who had from the first apprehended the state of affairs, know what had transpired. Both Durell & he had wondered at my coolness & nonchalance, which was now explained. Thenceforward I was more economical; & my disbursements, which had not *greatly* exceeded my earnings, at length were overtaken by them, & all was right again. It was a lesson I never forgot.

As being the "Mr. Newcome", it was my duty to sweep out the office every morning, before breakfast; and, as the autumn came on, to light the fire. In very cold weather we used to keep up pretty good fires; we had an unchallenged supply of coal in the closet which formed part of the office porch, & we did not spare it. The fireplace was one of the old fashion, with flat hobs; I recollect one occasion when the fire not only filled the grate, but was heaped far up, & expanded even over the two hobs. At meal times we never put on any guard, but left it all unprotected. One day, after dinner, we were frightened by finding that a burning bit of coal had leaped out upon the boarded floor, & had already burned a hole through it. The edges of this hole were brightly a-glow, owing to the draught coming from underneath; & a few moments more would no doubt have put the office in a blaze. I think only St. John and I knew of it: we put it out, & said as little as possible on the subject.

During the first summer, while the Skipper (our representative for the modern term "Governor") was in England, the dwelling house had a narrow escape from fire. I was standing alone at the Office window which looked up to the house, just after dinner one day, watching a vivid thunder storm. Suddenly I saw what appeared exactly as if a cannon had been fired directly out of the house-chimney. This was the lightning-flash which struck the house, attracted by an iron fender, which was set on end in the fireplace of the best bedroom. I saw the wide column of intense flame; the apparent direction, which suggested the resemblance to a cannon fired *out of* the chimney, was of course an illusion of my senses. The report too was the short, ear-piercing crack of a great gun when fired close to you; nothing like ordinary thunder. There was now a general rush to the house. Newell & Captain Andrews had been cosily sitting before the empty fire-place in the parlour, each smoking his long

pipe after dinner, while the glass of grog was in one case standing on the hob, in the other in the owner's hand. The two sitters had been in a moment jerked half-round, though unhurt; the glasses dashed down; much row and terror caused, but wondrously little damage. The electric course could be distinctly traced along the bell-wire half round the room, to the door opposite. The wire had been melted here & there; the gilding on the frames of two pictures on the wall had contracted into transverse bands, alternating with bands of black destitute of gold; the door had been thrown off its hinges, though these were unusually massive; & a few other freaks of this playful character, had sated the lightning's ire.

St. John thus recalls to my memory one result of this storm: "Do you recollect Newell's account of that event (the thunderbolt)? in his letter to Poole? We amused ourselves with its diction, counting the prodigious number of was-es crowded into the sentences. 'I was', and 'he was', and 'it was', &c. without end. I think you copied the letter, & fairly foamed with laughter — bad boys as we were!" (Letter V.)

The success of my first timid attempt at authorship<sup>18</sup> (See Vol. i, p. 314) emboldened me to try a second: & just before I sailed from England, I sent another anecdote to the Youth's Magazine. I took Jno. Brown into my confidence, who promised to look out & let me know if it was inserted. Perhaps the Editor discovered that I was merely borrowing, for the first letter from John contained this announcement (I recollect the ipsissima verba): "The Youth's Magazine has come, but *there is nothing for you in it.*" This must have been the number for May 1827; I think it did not appear in any future number.

\* \* \*

Charley would occasionally invite me to accompany him over to Harbour Grace, about 3 miles distant, to spend the evening with his family, sleep with him, & return to business next morning. His parents were a venerable pair of the ancien régime; all their manners, & their furniture, told of high breeding and "blue blood." There was a vast oil painting, covering nearly one wall of the dining room, such as we occasionally see in old mansions; representing a great spread of fruit, & a peacock, in all the dimensions & all the splendour of life. Charley had two sisters, Hannah, a sweet, sunny girl with bright eyes & auburn hair; Charlotte (Lotty), a little deformed, very gentle, but retiring, & less attractive. Both were very sweet, amiable girls. There was, also, an elder son, whom I never saw, & of whom I only heard subsequently, who was insane, & who was kept in confinement, though in the house.

One day, I think within my first year, having occasion to go over to Harbour Grace, I borrowed a horse to do the journey en cavalier. I think this was the first time I had ever crossed a horse's back, unless it was in going with my cousins Kemp from Holme to Corfe Castle, & then I had not attempted more than a walk. Now, however, I was more ambitious; & as my steed broke into a gentle trot, I jerked from side to side in a style quite edifying & novel to any passing pedestrians, no doubt; for I had no notion of holding with my knees. The success of the experiment did not encourage me to repeat it; & I did not know how to ride till I learned in Jamaica, in 1845.

The facilities for reading afforded by the Library I eagerly availed myself of, particularly in Novels, of which I presently became a great devourer. Several of Scott's, several of Bulwer's, of D'Israeli's, I read; but the American Tales of Cooper, & the

Irish series published under the nom de plume of "The O'Hara Family" were the prime favourites.<sup>19</sup> As an example of the absorption of interest with which I entered into these imaginary scenes, I remember that on one occasion this autumn (1827), I was sitting in my bedroom late at night, finishing a novel, and when I had done, it was some minutes before I could at all recall where I was, or my circumstances. At another time, I actually read through two of the three vols. of a novel at one sitting.

It was, if I am not mistaken, in "The Collegians," one of the O'Hara tales,<sup>20</sup> that I met with the following sentence: "If time be rightly defined as 'a succession of ideas'; then, to him whose mind holds but one abiding idea, there is no time." This definition struck me forcibly at the time; & all through life I have recurred to it, ever & anon, when I have read the ordinary confused definitions of time, in which the motions of the heavenly bodies are prominently mentioned. These are indeed the measurers of time; but the essence of time is something quite distinct from its admeasurement. The sentence I have just quoted formed the basis of many a discussion between St. John & me; & we speculated much upon eternity, as if its essence precluded succession. We talked too of God, as the schoolmen had done long before us; assuming that to Him there was no succession, but one abiding *now*.\* ("Do you remember," writes St. John, "the theological contest you had with Capt. Andrews one day on the *truth* of the Scriptures? — he maintaining the negative from the fact that Job asks, 'Is there any taste in the white of an egg?' 'Now,' said Andrews, 'I contend there is a taste, a very peculiar taste, in the white of an egg.' You insisted that the white of an egg was insipid, & that consequently, the Patriarch was right. Andrews appealed to me, & I answered that the Bible did not say whether there was or not; that it merely asked the question, which you could each answer as you liked. Both sides rejected this exegesis; and I was left in the minority." (Lett. iii. May 25. 1868))

The year 1827 closed, & I knew by experience what a Newfoundland winter was. It was by no means unbearable; the thermometer very rarely descends below zero, more than once or twice in the season: snow sets in, usually by the end of September, & by the middle of November it has become permanent till April. However, the weather is generally fine; we in the Office kept good fires, took daily walks to the great gun upon Harbour Rock, or in some other direction, & contrived to enjoy ourselves. Mr. Elson had returned in October, & resumed his wonted authority, & Newell had sunk to mere bookkeeper again.

It was, I think, in this winter that St. John urged me to write a novel. I at length complied; & taking down a quire of foolscap, began the adventures of one Edwin something, "a youth about 18", who "dropped a tear over the ship's side", as he left his native country. I passed my hero through sundry scenes, & among the rest, into a sea-fight with a Tunis corsair, in which, I said, "the Turks remained masters of the field". There was no attempt at fine writing; it was all very simple, & all very brief; for I finished off my story in some three or four pages. St. John read it very seriously, & mercifully restricted his criticism to the expression "field", in the sentence above cited, which, he said, as the subject was a *sea*-fight, was hardly *comme il faut*. He did not laugh at me; but I had sense enough to know that it was a very poor affair, & did not preserve it.

In the spring of 1828, when the vessels began to return from the Ice, I was sent to the Oil-stage to take count of the seal-pelts delivered. The Stage was a long projecting wharf, roofed & inclosed, carried out over the sea upon piles driven into

the bottom. I took my place, pencil & paper in hand at the open end of this stage, seated on an inverted tub. Before me is a wide hand-barrow: a boat loaded to the water's edge with seal-pelts is being slowly pulled from one of the schooners by a noisy crew, mostly Irish. As soon as she arrives at the wharf, two or three scramble up, & the rest remaining in the boat, begin to throw the heavy pelts of greasy, bloody fat up on the floor of the stage. At the same time one of the crew that has climbed up begins to lay them one by one, fur downward, on the barrow; singing out, as he lays down each, "one — two — three — four — tally," I at each one, making a mark on my paper, thus *////*. Five pelts make a barrow load, & instead of the word "five", the word "tally" is used, for then I am to make a diagonal line across the four *////*, & this formula is called "a tally". Immediately the word "tally" is uttered by the loader, which is always with a loud emphasis, I also say "tally"; & then two labourers catch up the barrow, & carry it into the recesses of the stage for the pelts to be skinned; a second barrow meanwhile receiving its tally, in exactly the same manner; while my marking goes on, but on the opposite side of the basal line; so that the record assumes this form:

*//// //*   *//// //*   *//// //*   *//// //*   *//// //*  


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*//// //*   *//// //*   *//// //*   *//// //*   *//// //*

this representing 50 pelts, & being very easily counted, while mistake is almost impossible: I forgot to say that one of the more responsible hands, perhaps the mate, also stands by, & keeps a like tally with mine, on behalf of the owner & crew.

Of course this was by no means so pleasant an employment as that I had been used to in the warmth & comfort & congenial company of the Counting-house. The dirty, brawling, vulgar fellows crowding around, uttering their low, witless jokes; or cursing & swearing; or abusing others; or bragging their achievements; the filth everywhere, the rancid grease, which could not fail to be absorbed by my shoes, & scattered over my clothes; so that whenever at bell-ringing, or in evening, I essayed to join my companions, the plain-spoken rogues would welcome me with "O Gosse, pray don't come very near! you stink so of seal-oil!" — then, at times, the bitter cold of winter, not yet yielding to spring, the snowy gales driving in on me, & blowing up through the corduroy poles [laid as for a road] which moor the floor; all this made me heartily glad when the last schooner was discharged, & I was again free to take my place with my fellows.

I picked up, however, during this occupation, a good deal of interesting information. I became familiar with the different species of seals, learned much of their habits & natural history, & of the adventures of the hunters; & formed a pretty graphic & correct idea of the circumstances of the voyage, & scenes at the ice. A good deal of this I embodied in a Journal, which I had continued to keep, ever since I parted from home, sending it consecutively to Mother, as book after book became filled. The one I now transmitted was embellished as I well recollect, with a coloured frontispiece, of full sheet size, folded so as to correspond with the leaves of the book. This represented an animated scene at the Ice, in which several Schooners were moored, & several boats' crews were scattered about, with their gaffs and guns, pursuing the young seals; others pelting them, & others dragging their loads of pelts to their boats. Though destitute of all artistic power, it was now a valuable picture; for it presented, with vividness & truth, a scene, which then had never been adequately described in print, certainly never depicted. I am sorry to say that this, with all the other records



of these times & scenes, has long been utterly & unaccountably lost; no trace having been preserved, except in fading memory, of what I took so much pains to perpetuate. Many shiftings of homes have occurred; and "three removes are as bad as a fire".

I have in my former volume alluded to my painful susceptibility to ghostly fears. In my imagination, a skeleton, or even a corpse, was nearly the same thing as a ghost. This spring, the body of a drowned sailor was picked up in the harbour, and laid under a shed on our premises, covered with a sail, till it could be buried. My morbid curiosity impelled me to look on it; & Captain Stevens turned back the sail, to show me the face. The corpse had evidently lain long in the water; so that only the greenish-white bones were left; at least in the parts not protected by the clothes. I felt a great awe & revulsion as I looked at it; & the grim, grinning skull haunted my dreams, & would suddenly come up before my eyes, when alone in the dark, for months. It was the first time I had ever beheld the relics of poor deceased humanity.

Among the families of Carbonear, of English lineage, the Taylors and the Pikes were extremely ~~even more prominent than the Taylors & the Lees in Marychurch.~~<sup>21</sup> Both houses had ramified wonderfully. My Aunt Gosse had been one of the Pikes of Carbonear, & Fanny Legg's older sister was married to a brother of hers, one Frank Pike. Of him a rather rich story was told: he affected to be something more of a gentleman than the rest of his race, rather foppish in his dress & manners; a good-looking fellow whose head was better furnished on the outside than the in. It was "the thing" to be a member of our Book Society; & Frank thought the reputation was worth his guinea, if the books were not. One day he was in company with St. John & another, who were talking of books; when Frank with his usual affected preliminary clearing of his throat, joined in. "Ahem! I read a very interesting book lately."

"Indeed, Mr. Pike? who was it by?"

"Ahem! ahem! I don't recollect who it was by."

"What was the subject?"

"Ahem! I think it was Voyages and Travels; but I'm not sure!"

"To what countries?"

"Ahem! ahem! I can't exactly recollect: but I think it was to 'Chainy' [China]."

One of this immense race of Pikes, John Pike, held the responsible office of Skipper on our premises; that is, he was the superintendent of all the labourers in the employ, exclusive of the artizans. I recall a curious blunder into which he fell at the time I am writing of. In February 1828, the Brunswick Theatre fell in London with much loss of life. The arrival of the first spring ship from England brought newspapers containing copious details of the calamity. Skipper Pike had boarded the vessel with some of his men, as she came into harbour, & I suppose had looked into one of the papers. He presently comes up to the office, & thus unburdens himself of his news. "Been a earthquake, I hear. Down in New Brunswick, I'm told. Good many people killed, I dare say." The name of the theatre had evoked in the poor man's dull brain, the only Brunswick he knew anything of, the neighbour province of New Brunswick; & as that could fall only by an earthquake, so Johnny presently fashioned it in his inward consciousness.

One morning he burst in, and, addressing no one of us in particular, but the office generally, said, in a tone half plaintive, half indignant; "Here's my wife been & had another miscarriage! 'Tis enough to knock down the constitution of a horse,

let alone a hoo-man." This, to our ribald ears! He had a curious habit of going away in the midst of his talk, which we would hear as he walked up the lane, the sounds becoming more & more faint until they died away in the distance.

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[Part II] St. Mary's [1828-9]

Early in August, 1828, I was sent for by Mr. Elson, & told that I must get myself ready to go to St. Mary's, & take my place in the office there. This I knew of only as an obscure, semi-barbarous settlement on the South coast of Newfoundland, where we had gathered that the firm had this summer purchased an old establishment. My heart sank within me at this command, which was delivered in Mr. E's dry, short, peremptory manner; remonstrance I knew would be useless, even if I had had the courage to make it, which, however, was out of the question. It seemed an exile to the antipodes; to be severed from all my pleasant companions & associations, to be shut up in an out-of-the-world hole, for an indefinite period; for no termination of my banishment was hinted. I could only bow in dumb silence, & rush down to the office, & there pour out my sorrow to my sympathizing fellows, not without tears.

The "Plover," a schooner recently purchased, was being sent round with a cargo of supplies, and Johns, formerly mate of the Brig "Carbonear," was appointed to be her captain. On board of this vessel I took my place, & sailed. I recollect looking in to the port of St. John's, as we passed by the next morning, through the entrance called "The Narrows"; & being struck with the appropriateness of the appellation — the approximate cliffs looking like gigantic walls on each side of the narrow lane.

All the rest of the day, as we ran down the coast, we were enveloped in a dense sea-fog, raw, damp, cold, & miserable; so that we could see nothing; & on the next, that is, the third morning, we got into the harbour of St. Mary's.

During the second day of this voyage, I saw a phenomenon of great interest. On mounting the rigging some twenty feet or so above the sea-level, I found myself in bright sunshine, with the fog spread below me, like a plain of cotton. On this surface my shadow was projected, the head surrounded, at some distance, by a circle or halo of rainbow colours. I had been recently reading Scoresby's "Arctic Regions", in which he describes this appearance, under the name of fog-bow, or fog-circle.<sup>22</sup> The absolute identity of his description with what I beheld struck me very forcibly.

It was a dreary, desolate place indeed: there might perhaps be 3 or 400 inhabitants, almost all of the fisherman or labourer class, & for the most part Irish. There were two mercantile establishments; the principal, which our house had recently purchased, & another, of much humbler pretensions, kept by a genial, jovial, twinkling little old man, an Englishman named William Phippard, who also filled the office of stipendiary magistrate.

Our establishment was presided over by one John W. Martin, a tall, thin, keen man about 40, originally of Poole. I had known something of his kindred. One of our schoolfellows at Sells's [school], had been a dull, heavy youth named Sam Martin, his younger brother; & his father had been one of the prominent features of Poole Quay. He was a little undersized fat man, with a merry laugh & a loud, chirping voice, with some jest or badinage ever on his lips, as he bustled hither & thither.

One of my latest images of Poole had been little Martin, gleefully hurrying along the pavement, with a great dog by his side, which he was inciting to leap up to his hand held aloft; he crying all the while, "Imperant dawg! imperant dawg!"

Well, the son of this worthy was now to be my superior — in fact, my master. There was nothing genial about him; he was as different from his father in disposition as he was in person. Consequential & bumptious in his deportment, he very early exercised his rod of authority; and all the while I remained under him, he took care to make it felt. At the first meal I had with him, I took his measure. I asked in conversation if there were any Indians in the neighbourhood. "What, you mean," said he, "the Abo-abo-abo-reegeenees," affecting learning, but pronouncing the awful word with the greatest difficulty.

The next day, as soon as dinner was done, I accompanied Johns on board the Plover for half an hour's chat, just as we had been used at Carbonear, to take a little indulgence after dinner. Presently a boat comes off to the vessel, with a message from Martin, that he wants to speak with me immediately. It is to tell me, that no one is permitted to leave the premises without asking his leave. He bored me with constant petty tyrannies, which, after the liberty to which I had been accustomed, & Mr. Elson's non-interference, were very galling. One day, on the wharf, among the labourers, where I was doing some duty or other, he took offence, & said, "You shan't be called *Mr.* Gosse any more; you shall be called plain Philip." I was very timid, & rarely answered again; but on this occasion I thought I saw my advantage in his own overweening sense of dignity; and naughtily replied; "Very well; and I'll call you plain John!" which shut his mouth, & stopped that move; while the labourers grinned approval.

On Sundays I was my own master. Once or twice, while the summer lasted, I took an exploring walk; as for instance, back from our premises to the rocky mouth of the Harbour, whence I could gaze up the Bay. But the scenery, though grand seaward, was not attractive; & the land was a treeless waste; & I had no companion to interchange a word with. So I soon took to the habit of going round the beach, immediately after breakfast, to Phippard's, spending the whole day there, and returning to my solitary bedroom only at night. Phippard had two daughters; one married to an Englishman named Coles, who commanded a little coasting craft, & who lived in the house, the other a pretty girl named Emma, who became my friend & companion.

Coles made a trip to St. John's, in the autumn, giving me an opportunity of sending letters to Carbonear. His return brought me most welcome replies, from Durell & St. John.

Johns soon left with the Plover, & presently our brig Eagle arrived. Her commander, Capt. Hunt, was an uneducated, but good-natured man, no companion. He encouraged my incipient attempts at shaving (with my pen knife), assuring me that he could make a beard come on the back of his hand, merely by shaving for it. This encouraged me to persevere; but the result was scarcely commensurate with the effort.

The stores & wharf had the reputation of being "haunted". The Irish servants told me of strange lights seen, & unaccountable sounds heard o' nights; but there was insinuated also a sly suspicion that the Demon was one Ned Toole, a good-natured, faithful servitor, who was a confidential fac-totum with Martin. It was quite salutary

that such a superstition should prevail; a ghost is an excellent watch-dog. Martin affected to despise the belief, but slyly nourished it notwithstanding. My bedroom was over the office; & between it and the other inhabited rooms, there was a large, unoccupied chamber called the Fur-room. We did a good business in valuable furs, beaver, otter, fox (various), musquash, &c. — & the whole room was hung round with dry skins, received from the trappers, awaiting shipment. It was important that this very costly property should be protected; & so, this Fur-room was haunted; not a pleasant thought for me, with my ghostly fears, but I had wit enough to see the rationale of it. The maid servants told me a harrowing story of an incident that had happened before I came. One night one of 'em told Martin that conversation was heard in the house, but no one could say whence the voices came. He listened, & heard the sound as of a man's grave tones, rather subdued, & occasionally intermitted. After a while, it was concluded that it came from the Fur-room. He accordingly took a cocked pistol in each hand, marched up stairs, the timid women crouching at his back with a candle, and, throwing open the door of the fur-room, authoritatively asked, "Who's here?" Nothing, however, was heard or seen; nor was any explication of the mystery attained; save that one of the girls quietly said, at the close, that she thought it was only the buzz of a blue-bottle fly!

As only Martin & myself ate together, our meals became pretty silent; and I acquired the habit of devouring my food as rapidly as possible; often eating my whole dinner within five minutes, by my watch. One day an enormous lobster, three or four times as large as our English species, was brought for sale, having been taken at the remote north extremity of the Harbour: we ate of it for tea.

One good thing I learned. Martin had kept his books by double-entry; & I learned both the principle & the practice here; & it has often been useful to me. I sat all day at the desk, mostly alone: but the work was not nearly sufficient to fill the time: no books were to be had: so that I was hard set for occupation. One day a little black kitten appeared by the door; whence, no one knew. It was a pretty little thing; but the least approach to acquaintance sent it scampering off. I set my mind on taming the little stranger; &, working cautiously day after day, by degrees succeeded; so that she submitted to be nursed at will. But lo! I found, as soon as this end was achieved, the excitement of hope, the pleasure, had wholly ceased: my amusement was gone!

One of the fishermen one day brought to me a pretty bird, of dense, soft, spotless white plumage, which he called a Sea-pigeon. As I was holding it in my hands, gazing on it with admiration, it suddenly darted its long, sharp beak up one of my nostrils, bringing down a pouring stream of blood. It was probably the Kittiwake Gull.

I was expected to be always up at 6 A.M.; & it was a felt luxury to be able to lie on Sunday mornings. Waking, of course, at the usual hour, the lying in bed awake for two whole hours, was an actual enjoyment. One morning I had some trifling ailment, & did not get up all day: this more than counterbalanced the pain, whatever it was; moreover, in the course of the day, my friend Emmy Phippard called to see me; &, simple, innocent girl as she was, came up without scruple into my room, & sat by my bed-side.

I occasionally saw the St. John's newspapers. Toward the end of autumn, they were a good deal occupied with a novel just published in England, "Salathiel"; now

known to be the production of the Rev. G. Croly.<sup>23</sup> Copious extracts were repeatedly given from this remarkable book, which greatly stirred my curiosity & desire to see it.

So 1828 passed gloomily away, with no prospect of change for me. But one morning, soon after the new year had opened, Martin at breakfast electrified me by the announcement that he was going to send me to Carbonear. I was to travel on foot across the country, trackless & buried deep in snow; but I thought not for an instant of any danger or labour, in the joy of getting back to companions & home. Old Joe Byrne, a trapper & furrier, familiar with the interior, a worthy, simple old fellow, & quite a character, was to be my "pilot", & to carry my little kit, my chest remaining to be sent round by sea in spring.

Accordingly, the next day, I left in a small boat, & was rowed up the Bay, to its extreme point, where Colinet River enters. I think the two hands were old Joe himself & Bill Davis, a young man who lived with him, & was his partner. Both of them are mentioned by name & described by J. B. Jukes, in his "Excursions in Newfoundland" (vol. ii, pages 30-37); as he saw them about a dozen years later.<sup>24</sup> I think I remained one day at Joe's house, when he regaled me with beaver meat (See my *Canad. Naturalist*, p. 44), which was very delicious.<sup>25</sup> An old Irish farmer was living near, whose English was imperfect, but he was communicative. In describing the abundance of ptarmigan, that he had met with, he said, "And you will see a thousand partridge; and she will look you right in the face." The old man told me of fossil bones, which he had himself seen, (but I think this was in Ireland) which he considered the relics of the giant-race mentioned in Scripture.<sup>26</sup> One skull he had seen, which when put over a man's head, like a cap, reached down over his shoulders. He spoke of it as a human skull; but doubtless it was that of an elephant.

After dinner, then, Joe & I set out to walk to Carbonear, striking due north for the head waters of Trinity Bay, some 16 or 17 miles in a direct line, but a little more, in the irregular way of our travel. Arrived before nightfall at a little "tilt", or rude hut, of Joe's, used in his pursuit of fur animals; where he soon made a good fire, & prepared our evening meal. I slept pretty well; but the hut had no chimney, & the pungent wood smoke was, to my uninitiated eyes & throat, a sad nuisance.

The second day was more laborious; in many places the snow was several feet deep: the foot on being set down would sink to the fork, & had to be dragged out slowly & painfully for the next step. Seven hours' hard walking accomplished, as Joe said, only five miles. I began to find the results of the unwonted labour: my urine was very high-coloured; I found I could not pass faeces, though urgently pressed. In my alarm I told Joe, who told me there was no cause to fear; it was produced by over exertion [thus, perhaps, dehydration]. The kind old man proffered his help in manipulation, without scruple, which I was fain to accept. Massulam frustratim extraxit,<sup>27</sup> with a pointed stick, & I had no more trouble. Another tilt of Joe's, but of much poorer construction, lodged us on the second night. We were now about half way across.

The third was the pleasantest day of our journey. The weather was fine; the snow tolerable, and my elasticity of youth was rising to the exertion. A remarkable characteristic of the country is a multitude of lakes or ponds, which are dilations of the rivers and rivulets, & which occur in succession, like links of a chain, or like beads on a string. These were now hard frozen, and snow-covered; but their perfect level, & the comparative thinness of the snow, (the wind having partially swept them)

induced Joe to select them for our travel, whenever our course would admit.\* (\*By Jukes's Map, these must have been all expansions of Rocky River, and of its many little tributary streams.)<sup>28</sup> Some of the larger ponds were several miles in length, & were often studded with islands clothed with lofty hard-woods (as birch & witch-hazel), forms of vegetation to which I was wholly unaccustomed in Newfoundland. On every side, as far as I could see, there were plenty of lofty woods, of deciduous timber trees, which indicated a better soil than usual. Altogether, from what I saw, I pictured this part of the country as being in summer very beautiful and attractive.

Old Joe was communicative; and in his capacity of furrier and trapper, his experience was valuable & interesting. He pointed out some large, rounded masses of snow, at the head of one lake, which he said covered a beaver-house, whence he had taken many beavers. In other places he showed me otter (or as he pronounced it "author") slides. They were always on the steep slope of the bank, where the water, even throughout the winter, remained unfrozen. These were as smooth & slippery as glass, caused by the otters sliding on them in play in the following manner. Several of these animals seek a suitable place, & then each in succession, lying flat on his belly, at the top of the bank, slides swiftly down over the snow, & plunges into the water. The others follow, while he crawls up the bank at some distance, and running round to the sliding place, takes his turn again to perform the same evolution as before. The wetness running from their bodies freezes on the surface of the slide, & so the snow becomes a smooth glitter of ice. This sport, the old trapper assured me, is frequently continued with the utmost eagerness, & with every demonstration of delight, for hours together. I know no other example of adult quadrupeds doing so human a thing as uniting in a regular set & ordained game.\* (\*See my "Canadian Naturalist", p. 41 & seq., for further particulars of the Newfoundland Otter, and its fur: & of the Beaver.)

We had made fair progress in this third day; & at its end, as there were no more hospitable tilts, we were fain to bivouak sub dio. Old Joe, however, was equal to the emergency. With the axe which he carried at his girdle, he quickly felled a number of trees in a spruce wood, causing them so to fall as that their branches & leafy tops should form a high & dense wall of foliage, around an open area, in which he kindled an immense blazing fire, feeding it with the trunks, which he cut into logs, & piled up in store sufficient for the whole night, before he ceased labour. What we did for food & drink I do not recollect; but I think we had biscuits & the cold remains of our cold meat; we were both temperate, & I suppose drank water from the neighbouring stream. My sleep was broken; and in my dreams, the surrounding woods, in the flickering light of the fire, dozing and half-awake as I was, took the appearance of an awful, gloomy cathedral, which oppressed me; so that I was glad when the tardy morning broke.

Again we trudged on, & quite early in the forenoon of this fourth day, we arrived at the sea in Trinity Bay. The long, narrow inlet called Dildo Harbour, was frozen over, & we walked down it. The ice was solid enough, but fresh water had flowed over it, flooding the whole to the depth of about a foot. This also had frozen over during the night, but only to such a degree as to bear the pressure of the foot for an instant: as soon as the weight of the body came, down went the foot to the ice below. Trudging thus, through freezing water, while the edge of the thin surface-ice cut the shin at every step, & this for a distance of two miles, was perhaps the

most trying incident of the whole journey. The consciousness that we were arrived at the northern waters, however, sustained my spirits, for I seemed almost at home.

A mile or two more now brought us to New Harbour, whence we had again to strike across country to Conception Bay. The distance was still about a dozen miles, but then it was a regular beaten path, constantly traversed; & we did it jauntily. In fact I cannot recall the slightest recollection of the journey; till we got to the head of Spaniard's Bay, near nightfall, whence 3 or 4 miles more of good road brought us to familiar Harbour Grace, & to the house of my friend St. John, who cordially welcomed me with the whole of the loving family.

That night I shared my friend Charley's bed. Sleep in a civilized bed was a luxury unfamiliar; & I was pretty well travel-tired: yet the excitement of gossip banished sleep. He thus recalls to me the memory of that night: "Have you forgotten the night, when, on your return from St. Mary's to Carbonear, you stopped at my father's, & when I kept you awake until near day-light relating what had occurred during your absence, till my father had to tap at the partition . . . to stop our clacking and laughing? And how, when you went over next day, the lads were all disappointed at finding their bottled ale all fizzled down flat & stale?"\* (\*St. John's Letters, IV)

[Part III] 1829. Carbonear. 1.

Here then I was, once more installed in my old place, & again occupied the desk next the door of the office, my back to the lane & dwelling-house. My old bed-room was now occupied by (I think) Luke Thomas, & I was obliged to put up with a dark little closet, with only a window opening into the passage, opposite Durell's room. In December following, (1829) Durell left the employ, & I immediately took possession of his nice room, & also of his desk in the office. The bed-room was small, but snug, and separated from all the other (occupied) rooms, being up the main staircase; which privacy was agreeable to me. The desk was the one facing my old place; the opposite side, in fact, of the same double desk. To it belonged a high stool, which I thenceforth habitually used, my companions generally standing to write. The desk had a capacious interior, & was furnished with a lock & key, so that I could keep letters, paintings, books, &c. there in privacy. At my right elbow was a window looking out upon the garden; and this, by and by, when my entomological pursuits began, was a great convenience.

The fellows were all open-mouthed about the new novel "Salathiel", the extracts from which had so enchanted me at St. Mary's. I soon got it, & was delighted with its grandeur & scriptural eloquence. Presently, meo more, I found I could repeat long passages of it without any effort to learn them. This book, I doubt not, laid the foundation for my subsequent interest in Sacred Prophecy.

Among other things we read Morier's *Hajji Baba*,<sup>29</sup> & for a long time afterward such phrases as "Inshallah! wonderful wit!" "twice-dotted Ass!" "I had eaten dirt" were habitually in our mouths.

St. John had a copy of Curran's *Examples of Irish Eloquence*; & of Junius's *Letters*,<sup>30</sup> both of which were much read & discussed between us: no doubt both these works were helpful to me in forming my style and literary thought.

He continued to be the wit, & wag, & life of the whole circle. One day I had somehow missed the announcement of dinner ready, & went in after the meat had

been removed, to the mirth of the lads. The Skipper was kind, & had it brought back for me. Out of this incident Mr. Charley made a very humorous story, imitating Scripture language; introducing "John the Master," "John the Servant," "Philip the Presbyterian," sundry "And it came to pass," &c. The captains admired this, really; Stevens (of the "Julia") wished to add, "And there was one Luke, who looked and laughèd."

By the way, the laughing of the said Luke was something normal [usual]. St. John sat near the bottom of the table, at dinner, with Luke facing him. The former, with perfect nonchalance & apparent unconsciousness, would play buffoon tricks with his fingers in Luke's sight, but hidden by the table from Mr. Elson's; such as putting his five outstretched fingers into as many holes of the ragged table cloth, & holding it up; at which the poor, giggling Luke was ready to burst, & drew down a stern rebuke from Mr. Elson for his ill-manners: Charley, all the time, showing a wonderful command of countenance.

Luke Thomas was a nice, genial young fellow, with no superfluity of brains, but good-looking, merry, & a general favorite. One evening, this winter, as we were all sitting by the office-fire, he used a common, but disrespectful phrase concerning my "sister". Though I knew it was only a current phrase, & meant nothing personal, it was offensive; & meek and timid as I was, I immediately gave him a backhanded slap on the mouth, without a word. Of course we had a tussel; but St. John & Durell warmly approved me, for being jealous of my sister's name; & no breath was ever again uttered disrespectful to her.

Presently Luke fell desperately in love with Olivia Pack, Mr. Pack's second daughter, who was growing into a very beautiful girl, though somewhat bold, and, as we now say, "fast". One evening, at a party at Pack's, Luke was using some freedoms with Olivia, & received some scratches on his hand. These he carefully preserved for some time, not allowing them to heal, but looking on them tenderly, as mementoes of the evening. She was by no means cold to him: one evening, he and I were walking down the harbour, when we met Olivia alone. After a few moments' chat, she said, pointedly, "Good evening, Mr. Gosse," and walked away with Luke, leaving me standing; I distinctly recall the feeling of the hot blood rushing into my cheeks & ears, at the insult; for such it seemed to me.

It was, I think, this summer of 1829, that Luke was suddenly seized with a poetic furore. He would write a poem on Columbus. He took down a half-quire of hot-pressed quarto paper, mended a pen, and dashed off,

"Columbus, hail! . . . . ."

There he stopped; not a word more would come; & the poem remained, finally, a fragment of that extent.

I have said that Luke now occupied my old room, which was separated from St. John's only by a thin board partition. The latter, (Letters: ii. May 18, 1868) thus recalls an incident to my responsive memory. "Do you recollect the way I dispersed Luke Thomas and his card-playing party, by blowing the fumes of heated asafoetida through a tube from my room into his? I shan't soon forget the ludicrous scene, after the third or fourth whiff: the noisy lads, all brought to a stand still, each holding his nose & looking daggers at poor Luke, who protested no trick on his part, with great vehemence. I had a peep-hole, and could see all. Oh for Cruickshank's pencil!<sup>31</sup> How quickly they adjourned the game to a further opportunity, sine die!"



In the course of the spring Martin arrived from St. Mary's, to visit Mr. Elson, having crossed the isthmus nearly in my route, with old Joe as his pilot. Only he struck across direct from Colinet to the head waters of Conception Bay. At table, duly arrayed in black, with white choker, he narrates his adventures, how in the interior he climbed a tall tree to reconnoitre, & made out the high hills known as the Butterpots, above Holyrood Harbour, & so ascertained his whereabouts. For this route was terra incognita even for Joe himself. It was an exploration.

That same evening St. John & I put our heads together to show him up in a pasquinade, of which we made two copies in a rough sort of printing-hand, & stuck them up as handbills in the town:

“Lost stolen or strayed:

From St. Mary's, on or about. . . a  
Black Beast, with white face and neck,  
. . . making hideous attempts to articulate  
big words. . . was last seen on the top  
of a high tree casting a vacant stare  
over the surrounding country.”

Next day at dinner M. charges me with “describing him in a placard”. Mr. Elson takes it, with real (or assumed) anger, as an affront to himself, as of course it was, though not so intended. There was a current tradition in the office that Mr. E. himself had, in his earlier days, when a clerk in Kemps' office at Poole, been guilty of similar escapades, by the aid of old Joey Moore's printing house; so that possibly he did not look at mine as an unpardonable offence: he never mentioned it any more; & Martin presently returned to his solitary reign.<sup>32</sup>

I think it was in the course of this season that I read with deep interest, the voyages of discovery then recently made, for the Northwest Passage by Parry, Ross; and the overland expeditions of Franklin & Richardson.<sup>33</sup> From the latter I took the copy, in water-colours, of the red granite Waterfalls, which I still possess. About the same time I compiled the Map of the Polar Regions on cardboard, from the same authorities. Both of these labours of mine are kept in my Father's large portfolio.

Nor was my mind wholly dormant on the subject of natural history. I was much interested in the beauty & in the habits of a very elegant little bird, I believe the Blue-eyed Yellow Warbler of Wilson.<sup>34</sup> Les lieux of the office were at the bottom of the garden among the willows that fringed the brook. This tiny bird was frequently during the summer hunting its insect prey among the twigs of the trees, where I could watch it from the window; & by imitating its chirp could so excite its curiosity as to bring it peeping up to within a foot or two of my face.

This summer I found a large and striking insect, a female *Sirex gigas*, wh. after admiring ignorantly, I threw into the front parlour window. It exemplifies the amount of cleaning to which the house was habitually subjected, that, just three years after, when I began to collect Insects systematically, this *Sirex* was still lying undisturbed where I had thrown it & became the nucleus of my incipient cabinet.

We disputed with ardour on all subjects; &, of course, the rival claims of Election and Free-will were a frequent bone of contention. I thought I had settled the point by this dogma: “God's prescience is like memory. He knows, but does not influence.”

It was about this time that an addition to our staff arrived, in the shape of a lad of about 14, named Samuel Wm. Sprague, of Exmouth. He was a nephew of Mr. Elson's, & was, at first, a good deal at the Upper House; but found occupation in the office. A simple boy, of not much education, having very red hair, he soon became a butt, & was called "Carrots". St. John drew a pencil sketch of him, which I still possess: rude enough, but very much like him in feature & expression. We used, too, to sketch him in pen & ink, always taking care to put his hair in, with *red* ink. One day St. John would have Sprague spar with me, he holding S.'s hands: I had no notion of boxing at all; & the result was, that presently I got a smart tap on the tip of my olfactory, & a copious flow of "claret" terminated the game.

Sprague still survives in New Brunswick, whence I had a long letter from him three years ago.

St. John had fallen desperately in love with a Miss Elizabeth Comer, recently from Poole, whence she had come to live with her brother [William S. Comer], the Editor of "The Conception Bay Mercury", a weekly newspaper issued at Harbour Grace. She was a pretty & elegant girl, well-educated, & thoroughly a lady in manners, & worthy of him. The brother was averse to the courtship, but Betsy was not, & she managed to make her favourable sentiments known to her lover, by means of his sisters. Accordingly one morning, about 5 o'clock, Mr. Burt, the clergyman, was in waiting at the church, when old Oliver St. John, & his sympathizing daughters Hannah & Lotty for bridesmaids, came in, followed by Charley & his sweet maiden, who had contrived at that early hour to outwit her suspicious brother, proving the proverb, that "Love laughs at Locksmiths". The old gentleman gave her away; & so on that bright 28th. of June, 1829, our wag became a proud & happy husband. Comer was soon reconciled to them; he being by no means a churl: she made an admirable wife; & they have lived in much happiness ever since.

Thenceforward he began to run over to Harbour Grace for two or three nights of each week, returning to the office in the early morning. Still, he was not quite the same to us now as before; & as the marriage of a clerk, without special consent, was not regarded with favour in high quarters, Mr. Elson, after a time, intimated that he must seek some other employment; & so, in little more than a year after his marriage, St. John ceased to be one of us.

Newell, one day, finding fault with me for some carelessness or other, burst out, as was *not* usual with him, with, "Why, you stupid man! don't you see . . ." The ire & the railing did not offend me nearly so much as the term "man" gratified me. It was the first time I had been called *a man*.

One of the books that I had brought with me was Dr. Watts, On the Improvement of the Mind: or as it was more briefly designated, "Watts on the Mind."<sup>35</sup> This book Newell had borrowed of me; & as after a while, he made no motion to return it, I was anxious to get it back. I was too bashful to ask him directly: but one day I turned to St. John & said, "What's on my mind, Charley?" Newell made no remark; but in the afternoon, he brought my book & returned it with thanks; making me feel as if I had done a rude thing; though the lads thought it a great stroke of strategy.

Just about the close of the year, St. John teasing me more than usual, I, in passion, flung at him a round lignum vitae ruler as he escaped through the door of the office. The brittle ruler caught the edge of the closing door, & flew into fragments.

I was in great terror for fear of blame, but being alone, I thrust the pieces into the fire, & went to dinner. I kept my own counsel, & heard no inquiries for the missing ruler.

The year 1830 proceeded with little variation in our circumstances. Durell was gone; Sprague was come; St. John was married: but the office was as gay & I as light-hearted as ever. Early in the year Newell, St. John & I each tried our skill in a parody of Byron's "Destruction of Sennacherib"; the North-shore men being the subject. We afterwards prepared notes, & I copied all into a book, which I entitled "Fugientia". Only a few years ago I recollect seeing this book; but now I cannot by any searching find it. They were all worthless.

About the same time I made a large Map of Avalon, by carefully putting together such charts of the Bays of Newfoundland as I had access to. For this Map, Martin, who again visited Carbonear this spring, offered me ten shillings, which I eagerly accepted.

I am not sure whether it was in this, or the preceding spring, that I fell under Apsey's wrath.\* (\*This must have been in the year 1829, however, because what follows was certainly not later than Feb. 1830.) We were all at breakfast, Lush presiding. I had, as usual, got a book out of the closet, which I was reading at table. Apsey was rattling away with some jocular nonsense, which interrupted me; & in my impatience I muttered "tsh!" again & again. He took no notice for a while, but at length fired up, & rated me fiercely, calling me, "You son of a bitch!" I was sufficiently annihilated.

But a mighty revolution was preparing in Apsey's heart & mind. On Candlemas day of this year [2 February, the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary], which from the prevalence of Popish superstition, was kept as a holiday by the lower classes, though not by us, there was some service at the Wesleyan chapel. Apsey burst into the office in the morning, & astonished us all by narrating, in his rapid inconsequential style, that he had just been in to Mr. Elson to ask permission to shut up the store, & go down to Meeting. "'Not in the least,' says Mr. Elson, 'not in the least'; & so I am going." We easily understood that what was meant was that Mr. E. had not the least objection; but our wonderment was great, what inducement Apsey could find to go to a Wesleyan meeting. However we waited not long; for he made no secret of his change: he was deeply & soundly converted to God; presently joined himself to the Methodist Society, & continued a most zealous, godly & consistent member, until the 30th. of April, 1869, when he died at the age of 71. A very interesting Memoir of him, by his friend & my acquaintance, Mr. Peters of Carbonear, was inserted in a Halifax (N.S.) paper, which St. John kindly sent me, and which I preserve with much value.

Apsey's conversion was a very striking fact. His previous character, jovial, profane, licentious, was well known; & his godliness now was manifest to all; and in every thing. Hot & irascible as he was by nature, as the above anecdote shows, I have seen him bear unmoved the vilest railing of a low Irish blackguard, who at length, emboldened by Apsey's meekness, who literally answered him not a word, lifted his foot to A's posterior, & gave him a pushing kick that drove him several feet; which the dear man, to the wonder of all who witnessed it — for it was on his own store-platform, & there were a dozen or more fellows looking on — bore without

the slightest resentment. I once heard one of the bigoted Papists say, "If there is a good man amongst ye, 'tis Misther Apsey."

No doubt this work of God's grace bore fruit by & by. For, as years rolled by, one after another of pretty nearly all our fellows became the Lord's — myself, then Sprague, St. John, Lush, & Newell — while I am not aware that of the fellows at Pack's, or either of the other Employes, one single individual, first or last, professed godliness. It seemed as if a blessing came upon *our* house.

For the present, however, in the circle in which I revolved, nothing was changed. My conscience, indeed, was not at rest; for I distinctly recall conversations with Charley, this summer, as I frequently accompanied him part of his way homeward, in the evenings, when our talk would turn on the necessity of personal religion, and the danger of continuing without it. He was uneasy, as well as I; yet for the present, no crisis came for either.

I have said that the tastes of our house were more intellectual than those of the rest. Yet, perhaps more privately, we loved the same earthly things. I got hold of some of the tiny song-books, called "Little Warblers",<sup>36</sup> & learned a good many songs, sentimental and comic, some of which cleave to memory still.

One evening Pack's fellows gave a dinner & a jollification in their store. I was invited, perhaps for my brother's sake. There were speeches, & songs: "Here's a health to the King, God bless him!" &c. The wine flowed freely, & I became a little elevated; not to the extent, however, of losing my self-possession in the least. This was the only approach to intoxication that memory recalls in my whole life.

We used to see caricatures from the London shops, brought by the captains, I suppose: most of them were, I think, Cruickshank's. I well recollect "The woman wot plays with a sovereign", a hit at the liaison of George IV with the Marchioness of Cunningham; and a leering fellow looking out for lodgings, which a pretty servant-maid is showing. "I hope you are to be let with the lodgings." "No sir: I am to be let—alone!"

My handwriting was a wretched scrawl, without any character, & I was thoroughly ashamed of it. This spring I received a letter from John H. Cozens of Brigus, but whom I had known when he was at school at Blandford. The writing struck me as so pretty and clerkly, that I determined to model my own on it; in which I succeeded to some encouraging extent.

One D. E. Gilmour, late of Winchester, arrived from England, took a house and set up a school for boys. He was a man of mind and education, but of unusual ugliness. At first his face was revolting to me, but after some time, suddenly recollecting this impression I wondered that his face was by no means disagreeable to me. Of course it was the same face, but familiarity & friendship had wholly destroyed the sense of its ugliness. He was a young, unmarried man, & soon took his place in the clerkly circle.

Soon after his arrival, I sent a letter to Comer for insertion in the "Mercury," under the signature of "Jack i' the box." It was simply an indignant remonstrance against the practice of allowing heaps of caplin, & offal fish, preserved for manure, to lie in public, putrefying under the summer's sun. The letter wound up with the words, "such a state of things loudly calls for a House of Assembly." One of Pack's fellows, S. Daniel, a very conceited fellow, only a month or so before imported from Ireland, replied, but evidently only for the sake of a certain parallelism in the

pseudonym which he adopted, "Will o' the wisp," which he thought witty. Next week comes Jack i' the box's rejoinder, "surprised that the complaint should have given offence"; adding "lest my silence should be construed into a conviction of the justice of his furious attack" &c. &c. & closing by saying that the critic employed "abuse instead of argument, and ridicule instead of reasoning;"—(which alliterative antithesis I fancied to be worthy of old, ponderous Dr. Johnson himself).<sup>37</sup>

But besides Jack's own back-blow, there appeared in the same number another slap at the intruding Will, signed ★ [star], who wished to show that he had discovered his identity, by introducing the words, "A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!" This, as I long afterwards learned, was Gilmour; & the sign under which he chose to write was perhaps prophetic, since a year or two later he thought the growing importance of Carbonear warranted the establishment of a weekly newspaper of its own,<sup>38</sup> of which accordingly D. E. Gilmour became Editor as well as Proprietor, & which he named "The Star".\* (\*All but the outline of these facts had faded from my memory: but my brother William recalls them to me. To his Letters of February 12th. and Feb. 18th. 1868, I am indebted for these amusing details.)

These wordy wars served to enliven our little society during the summer. But presently we heard more exciting news; for the King, George IV, died "without being desired", making room for his sailor brother, William IV, who had, in his scapegrace youth, been in Newfoundland, & had left a somewhat unsavoury reputation behind him. And a little later, we heard of the Revolution in France, the escape of Charles X to England, landing at Lulworth near Poole, and of the spread of the revolutionary earthquake all over Europe.

I well recollect talking on this subject with John Moxley, one of the better sort of Irish fishermen, as we walked along Carbonear Beach, immediately after the news came. He was anxiously asking whether I thought there was likelihood of war with France, because of the Revolution: & I replied, in my enthusiastic way, "Oh no! our king William and the new king of the French are just like brothers."

It was, I think, this summer, that one day, after dinner, we had been taking our customary walk down to Harbor-rock, nobly regardless of time & duty, when coolly sauntering back to the countinghouse, we were surprised to find the door open. Within, an't please ye, was Mr. Elson himself, standing at one of our desks, giving a receipt for fish delivered to one of the Northshore men; which was the duty of one of the subordinate clerks. The old Skipper takes not the slightest notice of us, who, suddenly dropping our jaunty swagger, slink shamefaced to our places, but having written out the document, hands it to the fisherman, saying pointedly, "Remember, Mr. Carnall, I am the man whose business it is to make out receipts." "Yaas, Sir"; says the poor man, all unconscious of the sarcasm in the remark, which was not meant for him, but for us, whom it cut keenly enough. Instantly away bustles the Skipper, rubbing his hands, as was his custom whenever he thought he had made a good hit: & saying not a single word to either of us. This indirect way of conveying a reproof to us was quite characteristic of our worthy Governor.

This book professes to be but "Anecdotes and Reminiscences"; and I must be content to jot them down in approximate chronological sequence, without caring for much moral or logical connexion between the individual facts.

My compassion was strongly excited this summer by seeing a miserable goat wandering in the office lane, in suspended parturition; the foetus half-extruded. All

day we saw her in this condition, bleating plaintively. I would gladly have helped her, but did not well know how; & she would not be approached. Next day I saw her lying dead under the wharf, the foetus no more advanced; & a great brute of a sow was munching at her bowels.

Luke Thomas and Sprague had been in the habit of behaving irreverently at the Wesleyan Chapel. One Sunday morning the giggling & whispering was worse than usual; when Mr. Haigh, the minister, stopping in his sermon, & turning to our pew, which was at the side of the Chapel, began a set-down to Mr. Luke. "Young man, your conduct has been observed. . ." I recollect these opening words distinctly, but not the continuation. Luke had grace enough to feel terribly ashamed, & resolved to go thither no more. I felt that he had richly deserved it. I forgot to mention that a large square pew, both here & at the Church, was the property of the firm.

I think I have before alluded to my morbid anxiety that our family poverty shd. not be known. This summer I sent home to Mother £5, as a contribution out of my earnings; but so jealous was I that no suspicion should be awakened either in the mind of Mr. Elson, or of my fellows in the office, who would see the bill-book, that I got Mr. E. to draw me *two* bills of exchange, of varying amounts, each with odd shillings & pence (as, suppose £1.7.10 and £3.15.6), in order to pass under the disguise of meeting tradesmen's bills in England, due from me. No questions, however, were asked. (N.B. I a little doubt, now, whether this incident did not occur a year or two later; viz. after my visit home in 1832, when the presumption, of having accounts in England to meet, would be more likely.)

Fenimore Cooper's American novels we read with great appreciation. I made a sketch of an imaginary head, with the chivalrous scalp lock, to represent that of Conanchet, the Indian sagamore.

I had become an enthusiastic admirer of Poetry; I had already a fair measure of critical taste. I began to make a collection of short pieces, which I copied out on octavo paper, with a view to form a volume, which I entitled "Gems". I began in October 1830, with Campbell's "Hohenlinden."<sup>39</sup> In this work I persevered with unwavering constancy for several years, not hurrying, nor inserting any piece merely for the sake of making progress, but subjecting each to all the critical acumen I was master of; so that it was upwards of four years (Dec. 31, 1834) before the volume was completed. It consisted of 99 poems, including a few — as passages from Isaiah and Joel, &c., from Ossian,<sup>40</sup> & from Salathiel — which were not in verse. A few poems were admitted which maturer judgment & more chastened taste would doubtless have rejected: but looking over the volume, which I still preserve, after 40 years, I do not feel at all ashamed of that youthful selection. My enthusiasm was such that I often used to say, I would willingly walk several miles to get a poem worthy of admission. I copied them, especially after the first few, with much care and neatness; & the compilation was instrumental in forming a habit of doing such little matters, with order and elegance. The selection affords interesting evidence of the books which I read during the period I have named; as some notable omissions prove that some of our first-rate poets had not fallen under my eye. For example, Shelley & Southey only at second-hand, in extracts; Keats not at all. A volume of Poems by M.J.J. (Mary Jane Jewsbury)<sup>41</sup> was valuable to me, not only as affording me several pieces of much elegance & tenderness, but by certain essays of criticism which it contained, from which I learned much. The leaf containing isolated fragments, which is loose

at the end of the volume "Gems", consists, I believe, almost wholly of illustrations cited in her criticism.

The collection of others' Poems excited me to seek the Muse myself. During the following spring (of 1831), we heard of the extension of the revolutionary spirit to Poland, which had risen against the tyranny of Constantine in December, & had expelled the Russians from Warsaw. Our young sympathies were enlisted for the chivalric Poles, & I wrote a song, "To Poland;" in the manner, & in the measure too, of Burns's "Scots whae hae". With this piece I duly began a volume, to which I affixed the title, "Sprigs of Laurel", in pencil only, as being, for the present, a title only *in posse*. This song, I see, bears date "April 22. 1831"; it is followed by two poems on Scripture subjects, written within a month of the first; a few lines in heroic measure, in July of the same year; a description of Spring in blank verse, written for a friend's album at Wimborne, on my return to England in 1839; and there the volume ends! My genius lay not in poesy.

A few of us young men united during the winter to form a Debating Society, which met weekly for speech-making & discussion. There was a good deal of excitement in the newspapers & in private circles, on the point of a Local Legislature to be granted the colony by the parent country; & a good deal of our discussion hinged on this theme. Of this Society I shall have to speak more definitely, when I come to the following spring, as I have very full records of our *then* Meetings; whereas of those of the *present*, my recollections are very dim. Its chief point of interest was that this was the first Institution of a literary or scientific character, formed in Newfoundland.

The winters varied much in severity & in duration; sometimes they were open, comparatively mild & yielding to an early spring; sometimes severely cold, the harbour early frozen over, & long protracted into the spring. This latter condition was generally liked, for the broad plain of the frozen harbour, two miles long and one broad, being swept by the winds, in general, pretty free from snow, was the scene of much hilarity. Sleighs with tinkling bells, bore merry parties to & fro, or carrying ladies in furs were pushed by the eager beaux: or the ladies would crowd to admire the evolutions of the skilful skaters; of whom our St. John (now no more seen among us) had been one of the most daring and expert. I never learned; for games of rivalry with others were never much to my mind.

One planter of the town, whom I knew well, had, a few years before I came, skated across the harbour, after only a single night's freezing — a most perilous & fool-hardy adventure. It was said that his skates actually cut through the thin ice as he went; & that only the rapidity with which he flew along, & the toughness of salt-water ice, as compared with the brittleness of fresh, secured his safety. As illustrating this latter quality, gazers on the shore declared that the skater was invisible to them in the middle of his course, owing to the curvature of the surface of ice under his weight, which bent but did not break.

As, in such circumstances, the frozen surface continually increases in thickness, it occasionally happens that, when the Schooners have to leave for the sealing voyage, they are fast locked up. Then they must be sawn out; a lively & interesting process, which I have more than once witnessed, and which I have essayed to describe, with an illustrative engraving, in my "Introduction to Zoology", i. 111.

The channels cut into the ice greatly weaken its tenacity; the first swell from the eastward breaks the mass into fragments; & these the first west wind carries bodily

out to sea, to return no more. Often, however, as spring advances, an Iceberg or two will slowly & grandly come sailing into the Bay; & a small one, perhaps as large as a haystack, will come into the harbour & presently take bottom some distance from shore. There it then remains, an island of spotless whiteness and fantastic shape, with caverns of loveliest azure; while its sub marine portion, vastly exceeding the exposed, can be traced through the translucent water, varying in tint according to the depth, from the palest green till it becomes invisible. Such a one appears in a coloured drawing by my brother William, of Bell Isle, seen from Portugal Cove, which I have in my portfolio.

These Icebergs, I ought to say, do not appear till May or June, being brought down by the spring southward current from the Polar Regions.

My sister sent me out, in the spring, "The Lady's Pocket Magazine" for 1830, 2 vols., still in my possession. The only thing notable in it was an article by N. P. Willis<sup>42</sup> entitled "Unwritten Philosophy", which took my fancy greatly, & which still bears my marginal pencil-marks. It was subsequently returned to Elizabeth. The plates of the fashions of that period are interesting.

Luke Thomas had by this time left the employ & returned to England. In his place there had arrived, I think this spring, a lad named William Fuller Lush, of near Salisbury, an intelligent, well-educated youth, son of a gentleman-farmer & of a lady in every respect his superior. William had been at school to Mr. Keynes of Blandford; he was placed under Lush in the shop, & to prevent confusion, we always called him "Fuller"; he immediately took his place in our circle, & was a favourite: growing ultimately into a loved friend of mine.

A furore for making musical instruments seized us. A carpenter's workshop was one of the offices on the premises, presided over by a worthy Irish artisan, Patrick Twohig. When I knew him first he was simple "Paddy", in everyone's mouth; but about the time of which I speak, he began to be aware of his dignity as a master tradesman, &, in a good-humoured way, to resent the homely abbreviation. Thus, on our entering the workshop with a "Paddy! I wish you'd . . .", he would run to the ladder of the loft, & looking up, would shout, "Paddy! come down here, Paddy! you're wanted, Paddy!" We of course accepted the correction, & substituted "Patrick", when all became right. After a short time, the style by general concession became "Mr. Twohig".

Well, we had been accustomed to be freely in and out of the shop; & I had learned to use a carpenter's tools — a practice, that I have never regretted in after life. Sprague was, I think, first to make so bold an essay; he made an excellent violin; in every detail it was comme il faut; & when finished was found to have good tones. I also made a violin; but first tried my "prentice han' " on an Aeolian harp. Both these instruments were satisfactory: the Harp I left with my sister at Poole, on my visit the following summer; and the violin, on which I learned to play (poorly, by ear only), I carried with me to Canada in 1835: its ultimate fate I forget.

Fuller had a delicate ear for music. His parents were pious dissenters; thus his acquaintance lay chiefly with *hymn* tunes, like my own. He could sing well, both tenor & bass; & thus a new element of social enjoyment was introduced into our little circle. Not that it was very manifest just yet; but a year or two later, when I had become decided for God, & took a definite place in the singing-gallery of the Methodist Chapel, both Sprague & Fuller joined the choir of the Church; & we had a good



deal of hymn-singing. By that time too Fuller had attained puberty, & could sustain the bass part ably.

But this is anticipating. As yet, my feelings were not at all developed religiously, and my sympathies were not at all towards Methodism. Before St. John left, I had been building "castles in the air" of my own future, looking forward to a house & a little plantation of my own in some pretty wooded spot in the neighbourhood. Here it was an essential part of my scheme (strangely enough, considering the time) that there should be public religious services, of which *I should be the minister*. I despised & ridiculed Wesley's Hymns; I would use Dr. Watts's,<sup>43</sup> & yet I would read the Liturgy of the Church of England, whose beautiful cadences I could deliver very effectively. St. John was my confidant in these fond picturings. At one time the chosen spot was a mile or so up the banks of the picturesque brook which forms the Pond at the Head of the Harbour. A little later, Lady Lake, a broad sheet of water at the back of Harbour Grace should be the place. I had even made a sketch of the house, as it was to be; & had added one of the Schooner, of which I was to be the owner, whose successful trips to the Ice were to furnish the requisite sinews of war. This pencil sketch, memorial of fond day-dreams! was still in my possession a few years ago; but where it is now, I know not.

There must have been another shifting of the imaginary estate, & that in the opposite direction. A little way along the North Shore there is a very romantic little inlet, like a circular pond, environed by land more than ordinarily fertile for Newfoundland. Here St. John had a little hereditary estate, tenanted by an old man named White, from whom he found it difficult to extract the rent. This little cosy place, known as Salmon Cove, must have put forth its claims in my imaginings of the future; for I recollect one stanza in a letter from my friend, about this period, written, as was his frequent custom, in free verse:

I'm glad to hear that Lady Lake  
Does not the precedency take  
Of Salmon Cove: who knows but yet  
Both you & I may puff and sweat,  
A ploughing up the spot, where now  
No plough is seen, save John White's sow.

Fuller Lush (who was no relative of John Lush) [in] this his first spring would sometimes occupy a Sunday afternoon by going into the woods, birds-nesting. He brought home no spoils; and, when asked, said he had killed the young birds. This excited our indignation, when he defended himself by saying, it was in order to put 'em out of their misery.

One of our ships arriving from some Italian port, the Captain brought as a speculation some very elegant vases and tazzi, of what appeared a mottled alabaster. I bought a pair of tazzi & sent them home as a present to my sister. They would not hold water, however; which destroyed the polish & eroded the surface. On cross-examination of the importer, I found they were but mimic marble, made of a preparation of rice-flour.

In the summer the lovely Lavinia Pack was married to Robert Ayles, who had been her father's clerk. My brother William was bridesman. In the rejoicings for the occasion, the ships in the harbour fired blank cartridge; but by a sad accident, the

wad from a gun on board my old ship the "Carbonear" struck a poor fellow on shore upon the temple, & killed him. I saw him as he lay, dying, or perhaps dead; but the muscles were still quivering. This accident greatly marred the festivities.

A very remarkable natural phenomenon occurred to my notice about this time. My brother & one or two others of Pack's young men made an excursion up to Brigus in their pleasure boat, & had invited me to accompany them. It was the only time I had ever visited the upper part of the Bay, except when I struck Spaniard's Bay, on my return from St. Mary's. We had made a pleasant trip up, & had been kindly entertained at Mrs. Cozens's, and were returning in the evening. We had got down as far as the Feather Point of Harbour Grace, when the wind, which had been light, suddenly fell dead calm. We took to our oars, & pulled awhile, till Musquito Cove, the next indentation S. of Carbonear, had opened, when a dense fog closed us in, which hiding from us both stars and landmarks, made further progress impossible. We could hear what was called the "rout of the shore", that is, the wash of the surf against the rocks & pebbly beach; but it was not safe to row with no other guide than this, & there was nothing for it, but to lie on our oars. It was a short summer night, & no great hardship was involved. We had no light nor means of procuring one, else we had a boat's compass on board.

It was now quite dark; when suddenly we saw a bright red light, like that of a candle, near the surface of the sea, through the fog, & supposing it to be the light of some fishing-skiff, we pulled towards it. But presently we perceived it to be in motion; now receding from us, now approaching us with great swiftness; sometimes shooting round our boat at a few yards' distance, then whizzing away until almost lost in the mist, then rapidly skimming along towards us again, so that we were lost in astonishment at its vagaries, & perhaps a little uncomfortable, as if it were not quite canny. We had repeatedly shouted unanswered; & besides, it had repeatedly come near enough to let us see that there was no boat, nor any other visible object but the flame itself. By and by, it disappeared, & we dropped our anchor, & lay quiet till early morning dispelled the fog, & we pulled in to our home.

The main interest of this phenomenon was the confirmation it affords to the hypothesis which has been broached, that the light called *ignis fatuus*, generally supposed to be the ignition of carburetted hydrogen-gas evolved from fetid marshes, is really produced, like that of the glow-worm, from the mole-cricket, or other large, nocturnal insect. The movements of this flame were exactly those of a great dragonfly; it kept within a foot or two of the surface; it seemed to be governed by some intelligence, shown by its persistently refusing to allow us a close approach. Every feature was against its having a gaseous origin; nor was it in the least degree like the familiar marine phosphorescence. My subsequent entomological studies did not, it is true, make me acquainted with any insect to which I could reasonably attribute it; but then nocturnal insects are not very obvious to observation; and I very rarely attempted collecting by night, except close to our dwelling.

I have recorded (i. 338) my efforts to learn the art of swimming, *with corks*, in Poole Harbour, in 1826. I had made no attempt since till this summer of 1831, when I set myself to learn without any adventitious aid, bathing repeatedly on the secluded beach of the South Side. Before autumn I had acquired the art.

My sister Elizabeth was now turned 18: she sent me a miniature of her, taken by Father, in which she appeared as a comely woman. This portrait is lost, as I know not what has become of it.

About this time I had an ambition of myself trying the art of portraiture. St. John (Letters ii. May 18. 1868) tells an amusing story, with considerable detail, of my having attempted a miniature of *him*, & of my showing it to William while we were eating pickled walnuts in my room. I fear, however, it is largely apocryphal: I have no recollection of ever attempting St. John, but rather of Wm. himself. William, however, had no remembrance of ever sitting to me; so that possibly Charley's memory may be better than mine here. His story recalls what I had quite forgotten, that Mother sent me out a bottle of pickled walnuts, which (now I am thus prompted) I vividly recollect. I made also a miniature of an imaginary lady, showy & meretricious.

This autumn of 1831 there were Races on the Reef behind Harbour Grace, & I, with Newell & St. John, was in the crowd. Mother had a little before sent me a jacket & a cap, both of blue cloth, the former bedecked with gilt buttons, the latter with a gold band: so that I looked like a young midshipman. These I was wearing at the festivity. Going into a booth for refreshment, an old fellow who was sitting there began to notice me, asking which of His Majesty's ships I belonged to. "The Elsonian", said I, when the old fellow, musing a moment, said he did not remember that ship. However, bowing politely, he drank "to my speedy promotion!" when I muttered something deprecatory of "these piping times of peace."<sup>44</sup> The sequel of the incident has quite escaped my recollection: but I quote from an amusing letter of Charley's (St. J.'s Lett. iv. July 4. 1868). "We left the tent somewhat abruptly, & the wine getting into my head, I began to criticise the horses, and thought that, in the last couple that ran, there was too much *disparagement*. 'What?' said you: 'too much what?' 'Disparagement!' A horse-laugh (very appropriate) from Newell! and a kind intimation from you, that I meant disparity. No, no; not a bit of it: the madeira in the head told me *disparagement* was the word, and '*disparagement*' it must be."

Lush had been spending the summer in England. Returning in autumn he described the opening of the new London Bridge, by the King, at which he had been a spectator; & also the Zoological Gardens, which had just been established in Regent's Park. This latter interested me most; & I made a coloured copy of a plan of the Garden, wh. Lush had brought with him.

[Part iv] 1832. Carbonear. II.

A year now opens which must remain the most memorable of my life. It is notable for several respects. I visited in it my native country, & my parents, after five years' absence. I commenced in it that serious and decisive devotion to scientific Natural History, which has given the bent to my whole life. Above all, it was in this year that I first definitely and solemnly yielded myself to God; and began that course heavenward, wh. though with many deviations and many haltings and many falls, I have been enabled to pursue, on the whole steadfastly, until now. In 1832 I became a New Creature in Jesus Christ.

From the opening of this year I have the advantage of written records of my history still preserved; consisting of copious journals, scientific and other, continued

with but slight interruptions until now: and copies of my principal letters, at least for several years.

Thus I took copious notes of every meeting of our Debating Society, from Jan. 21. to May 21st. By these, which enter into many amusing & graphic details, I find we consisted of 20 members (two of them honorary), who met every Saturday evening at 7, in Gilmour's School-room. To these Reports I refer.

My own most elaborate effort was on the question, proposed by Mr. G.E. Jaques, & discussed on the 25th. of Feby. — "Is the Brit. Govt. bound in justice to emancipate the Slaves in the W. Indies immediately, without affording remuneration to the Planters?" For this I composed a set oration, writing it out at length, & learning it by heart. I subsequently read it to St. John, & was surprised, that instead of enthusiastically applauding me, he thought me quite in error. In fact, I had treated the subject sentimentally, totally disregarding the truth and reason of the matter, & merely striving after high sentiment, eloquent bursts of indignation, pathetic appeals, harmonious cadences, & well balanced sentences. "Talk not of compensation! As well might the midnight robber", &c. &c. &c. "demand compensation from the traveller he has defrauded! As well mt. the" &c., &c., &c. uttered with hand uplifted, with indignant voice, & ore rotundo; but without the least regard to common sense, as if it was the Negro himself that was expected to pay the "compensation." But I myself had thought it rather an eloquent oration.

In the course of the spring, my brother Wm., who was one of the Debating Soc., sent to Comer, for the "Mercury", a Poem, inspired by the intelligence just received from England, that Parliament had granted a Local Government to the Colony. It was in high congratulatory strains,

"Awake O Newfoundland! . . . .

.....

Where grows the cranberry to feast thy deer."

— quite a long, heroic affair; but I can recall no more than these fragments. It was anonymous; & our waggish friend Charley, supposing it the production of young Stephen Pack, came out in the next week's "Mercury" with a parody, beginning,

"O Newfoundland! O Newfoundland! thou sleepy looking Isle!  
Beneath the blanket thou hast lain a miserable while."

William's poem (which I think was signed "Cabot") contained some allusion to "nabobs"; which gave occasion in the Parody to the line,

"And great nabobs, & little Bobs, have made their fortunes there."

This was a very successful hit, supposing that Steve Pack had been the author; for his father the merchant, was *Robert* Pack, a very diminutive, but very consequential & upstart, purse-proud fellow. The whole town rubbed their hands & winked at each other, over the telling words, "great nabobs and little Bobs." William intreated that I would keep his secret; & I did.

The 5th of May was one of the main pivots of life to me. The Wesleyan Minister, Rev. Richard Knight, was selling some of his spare books by auction. I was there, and bought Kanmacher's Edition of Adams's "Essays on the Microscope,"<sup>45</sup> 4to, which I still possess. The plan of this work had led the Author to treat largely on Insects, and to give minute instructions for their collection and preservation. I was

delighted with my prize; it just condensed & focussed the wandering rays of science that were kindling in my mind, & I enthusiastically resolved forthwith to collect Insects. At first I proposed to include the more handsome Butterflies and Moths & the larger Beetles, of which poor, barren Newfoundland yielded a poor store indeed; but not knowing how to make a limit, I presently enlarged my plan, & commenced an Entomologist in earnest. The *Sirex gigas*, which I had taken in 1829, was still lying on the sash of the parlour window: with this I began my collection. On the 6th of June, I took on a currant-bush in the garden, a very fine specimen of a very fine butterfly, the Camberwell Beauty, *Vanessa Antiopa*, of which, strange to say, I never saw another example, while I remained in the Island.

Owing to the long continuance of the Arctic ice on the coast, the Spring of 1832 was unprecedentedly late; so that my collection had not gone beyond a few minute & inconspicuous insects, before I sailed for England.

The Preface to my Entomological Journal, from which I gather the above particulars, ends with these prophetic sentences: "I cannot conclude . . . without noticing the superintending Providence that, without our forethought, often causes the most important events of our life to originate in some trifling & apparently accidental circumstance; to be, like our own huge globe, 'hung upon nothing'! After years only can decide, how much of that happiness wh. chequers my earthly existence, may have depended on the laying out of ten-shillings at a Book-sale."

The arrival of the spring vessels from Poole had mentioned a serious illness of my sister; but I had not felt any special alarm, until in the beginning of June news came that her life was in danger, & that she wished to see her absent brothers once more. I immediately took in the letter to Mr. Elson, who in the kindest manner said that I should go home in the next ship, to sail in a few weeks. It was distinctly stipulated (as I have before mentioned) that this privilege shd. be given me during my apprenticeship, & five out of the six years had now expired.

I dearly loved my sister; & the probability that I should not see her alive affected me keenly. I immediately remembered the resource of God: that "He is a very present help in trouble; that He commands his people to cast all their burdens on Him." I thought of this, & would have gone to Him; but then I felt that I was not one of his people; that He was not my God, for I had never accepted Him. I made up therefore my mind at once; I immediately, solemnly, deliberately, and uprightly, took God for my God, & yielded myself to be his servant and worshipper. I put away my idols from my heart, so far as I knew them, & set myself to live godly.

In all this there was no distinct recognition of Christ; no conspicuous sense of guilt, or sorrow for sin, or dread of the wrath of God: no prominent thought of the need of a covering, a hiding-place, a refuge, a Righteousness other than my own: no acceptance of Christ crucified for me: no thought of substitution.

This was not the aspect under which the Gospel had been habitually put before me. No doubt I knew of these aspects doctrinally, & latently they were in my mind. If I had been asked, "How can guilty sinners be accepted with God?" I could doubtless have answered, "Through Christ having died, the just for the unjust." I had with me Bickersteth's "Scripture Help", which is clear on these points, though not diffuse: I had been used to read from early childhood, not task-wise but for my own pleasure, Scott's Commentary, Hervey's works, Grace Kennedy's *Tales*,<sup>46</sup> Mrs. [Mary Martha] Sherwood's *Tales*, Jane Taylor's writings, and others' in the *Youths' Magazine*: I

was familiar with the [Westminster] Assembly's Catechism, & Watts's Hymns, besides many of Toplady; Cowper's, Hart's, & Wesley's, used in Dobell's Selection,<sup>47</sup> so that I am sure I must have been theoretically acquainted with Gospel Truth.

Nevertheless, my prominent thought was legal. I wanted the Almighty to be my Friend, to go to Him in my Need; I knew He required me to be holy; He had said, "My son, give me thy heart!" — I closed with Him; not hypocritically, but sincerely; intending henceforth to live a new, a holy life; to please & serve God. I knew nothing of my own weakness, or of the power of sin. My experience had much of the character of Rom. vii;<sup>48</sup> but it was, beyond doubt, the work of the spirit of God. I cannot say I was born again as yet: but a work was commenced which was preparatory to, & which culminated in regeneration. I at once came to God, with much confidence, as a Hearer of prayer, and He graciously honoured my faith, imperfect as it was.

As illustrating the tenderness of conscience then induced, I recollect the following incident. The use of profane language, so common around me, I had always avoided, until the last twelvemonth or so, when I had been gradually sliding into it. One day, some week or two after my exercise with God, I was alone in the office, when some agreeable occupation or other was suddenly interrupted by work sent down from Mr. E. In the irritation of the moment, I muttered, "Damn it!", not audibly, but to myself. Instantly my conscience was smitten; I confessed my sin before God, & never again fell into that transgression.

I presently told Apsy of my change. He rejoiced over me; & while I was in England he wrote me a long, loving, godly letter, beginning, "Dear Sir, & Brother, I trust, in Christ."

On the 10th July I sailed from Carbonear, in the Brig "Convivial," Capt. Hampton, for Poole. He was the most gentlemanly of our captains, a man of immense bulk, very kind & agreeable in his manners. This made the voyage very pleasant.

I kept a Diary, which I still possess. I see herein many evidences of that descriptive power, known as word-painting, which is characteristic of my later writings: such as the account of the Grampus (July 12th); of the sunset (16th); the rising moon (15th); the petrels (16th); the setting sun (19th); the luminosity of the sea (20th); Porpoises (21st & 24th); & the capture of one (31st); and the appearance of the coast of Devon & Dorset (Aug. 6th). On this last day I saw a rare cetaceous animal, probably the White Whale.

It was late in the evening that I stepped on Poole Quay. Five minutes brought me to the familiar house in Skinner Street. As I knocked at the door, my heart was in my mouth, for I knew not what tidings awaited me. My brother Tom answered my knock. "O Tom!" said I as I grasped his hand, "is all well?" for I could not speak Elizabeth's name. "Yes," said he, "very well!" And I felt a load taken from my heart. I found that though still weak, she was fast recovering; lodging at Parkstone for change of air, where Mother was with her.

Little did either of us sleep that night. We arranged an excursion at dawn of day. Tom fell into my plans with enthusiasm; & at 4 o'clock forth we sallied armed with pill-boxes at all points, ready for the capture of any unlucky insect desirous to experience the benefit of early rising. We took our way to Sturt Lane, a very pleasant, retired place between fields, with high hedges. During the voyage my dreams had been nightly running in the pursuit of Insects in the flowery fields of home: at length

it was a reality. I was in a humour to be pleased with everything; but even had it not been so, the morning was so fresh and bracing; the hedges so thickly green; & the flowers so sweet, that I could not have avoided being cheerful. The contrast, too, was so great & sudden, with the lone waters that had for so long a time met my eyes, that it was no wonder my heart was light, & I was ready to leap for joy. My brother entered into my feelings, & there was not a happier pair in broad England.

How often have I recalled that delightful morning! I was brimfull of happiness. The beautiful & luxuriant hedgerows; the mossy, gnarled oaks; the towering elms; the verdant fields; the fragrant flowers; the pretty warbling birds; the blue sky & bright sun; the dancing butterflies — above all, the unwonted freedom from a load of anxiety — altogether it seemed to my enchanted senses, just come from drear Newfoundland, like Paradise.

How I love to recall every little incident connected with that excursion! the poor brown Crane-fly, the first English insect I caught; then our crossing the ditch at the top of the lane; the little grey Moth under the oaks at [the] end of the last field; our return through the first field, where the Satyritæ were sporting on the sunny bank; the great fat *Musea* in Heckfordfield hedge, which I in my ignorance called a *Bombylius*; & the consequent display of entomological lore manifested all that day by Tom, in the frequent repetition of the sounding words “*Bombylius Bee-fly.*”

After breakfast Tom took me to Parkstone, where I had the joy of seeing dear Mother, & Elizabeth rapidly recovering. A good deal of my time I spent with her, till after a week or two she came home to Skinner Street. William had a holiday also, & arrived soon after I had come: & presently our dear Father also joined our circle, which was thus complete. Father & William made an excursion to Southampton & the Isle of Wight; but I did not stray 3 miles from Poole, in my whole visit.

I found little changed in Poole in my 5 years' absence. “Our lane,” which had been a cul-de-sac, was now a thoroughfare, by the turning of the old gardens at the end into new streets. There was, too, a new Public Library built at the bottom of High-street, of which some of my friends kindly made me free, & where I read a good deal. My time was largely spent in entomological excursions; & the ardour & singleness with which I threw myself into this pursuit, was, I am sure, both now & subsequently, a very merciful preservation against many of the more insidious & too often successful, temptations of youth. My cousin Tom Salter, an ardent young botanist, was occasionally my companion in my scientific walks, & I made the acquaintance of Sam Harrison, who had for some time been engaged in collecting insects. We agreed to correspond, & to exchange duplicates on my return to Newfoundland, an engagement which was faithfully fulfilled. As he was the son of the most influential partner of our Firm, I do not doubt that my friendship with him gave me a sort of status with Mr. Elson & the Captains, & invested my pursuit of insects with a consideration, which would not otherwise have been conceded to it. This thought, however, did not occur to me at that time.

It was the era of the Reform bill in politics; of Penny Magazines, Useful Knowledge Societies, & Mechanics' Institutes, in literature. One of these last had been formed at Poole, at which Mr. Salter lectured on Chemistry, with illustrative experiments. I attended on one of these occasions.

During my stay I heard from St. John repeatedly; & his baby boy was made to write me, embodying some of his childish sayings about me, & the “nacky duty

f'y", which I was reputed to have in my pocket; & his hopes that I would return "morrow-days." I heard too, through the press, of a calamitous fire, on the 18th Augt., whereby a large part of the town of Harbour Grace was burned down. My friend's house, however, was spared.

On the 20th of Sept. (the day before Sir Walter Scott died) my brief but pleasant sojourn ended, & I sailed in the Convivial on her return to Carbonear. I kept no notes of the voyage, which was both tempestuous & long; for we did not arrive till the 1st of Novr. From this time, my letter-book & my entomological journals contain the chief records of my life, until I again crossed the Ocean.

Late as it was, I did what I could in collecting, & in study. My help in identification was almost wholly derived from the Linnean generic characters of Insects, in Tegg's London Encyclopedia,<sup>49</sup> which was in our library. These characteristics I carefully copied out; as well as those of Vertebrata; & I have these still. Of course, I met with many difficulties; but by degrees many of these were surmounted; & I learned very much from actual observation. I carefully recorded every fact which appeared to be of importance; a habit which was of great value. I thus became not merely a collector of insects merely, but a *scientific naturalist*.

The spiritual life which was begun in me was not sensibly promoted by this holiday. The ardour with which I pursued my new science, & the completeness with which it engrossed my thought, were not favourable to heavenliness of mind; though, on the other hand, it did materially, both now and subsequently, fortify me against many of the more ordinary & more virulent forms of temptation. I cannot recollect that I had any communication with a single person in England, on the change which had occurred in my inner life. Neither my mother, nor my father, ever asked me a question about the health of my soul. They saw I was outwardly correct and decorous; I went to the meeting with them. Close personal spiritual examination was not much the habit of Independent Dissenters: though I was inclined to openness, & would neither have resented nor evaded the closest probing. I called on Mr. Durant: he spoke about the nonconformist principle, and (as I afterwards learned) he was pleased that I quoted, in agreement with him, the Lord Jesus's saying, "My Kingdom is not of this world". But he made not the slightest approach to any inquiry whether I had personally embraced that Kingdom.

Yet, all the time, the Holy Spirit did keep alive the spark which He had kindled. I had a conscience toward God, & strove against temptation. The spark was alive; and that was all.

Immediately on my return to Carbonear, however, I took a decided stand for God. I received Brotherly help, sympathy, and counsel from Apsey; I at once joined the Methodist Society, becoming a member of Apsey's Class, & subsequently that of Mr. G.E. Jaques. The latter, whom I had hitherto known slightly, as one of the small merchants of the town, & a member of our Debating Society, had spent the winter in England, & in May, 1833, returned, bringing a bride with him. They were both decided Christians. I presently became very intimate with them, spending my Sundays at their house, & frequent week evenings: the reading & conversation was habitually spiritual, without being morbid; and thus rapidly grew up that earnest love & esteem between us, which has continued unabated for near forty years. This friendship was very helpful to my spiritual life: it alienated me more & more from the companionship of the unconverted young men of the place: it was a marked



commencement of that course of decided separateness from the world, wh. I have sought to maintain ever since.

I read (lent me by my friends) the theological writings of John & Charles Wesley, whence the Divine scheme of salvation through Christ became known to me. Hitherto I had been feeling after God, trying to yield myself to his requirements, yet knowing nothing of acceptance with Him, nor much exercised about it. Now I learned to lean on the atoning work of Christ, on his Blood shed for me, as the ground on which I could meet God; I did, in some sensible degree, know and believe the love which God had for me, & took the stand of a child, reconciled in his Son.

I was diligent in using such means & helps to Godliness as I knew of. The Methodist discipline urges periodical fasting: I accordingly abstained on Fridays from going in to dinner, tasting no kind of food from breakfast to tea, & always scrupulously spending the hour in religious exercises; usually in the Office, where I could be sure of solitude.

I got the habit of praying *aloud* in my chamber, perhaps because of the superior definiteness of petition & isolation of mind which pronounced words seem to induce. My room was distant from the other bed-rooms; & though earnestness unconsciously produced loudness I presumed that I was inaudible to others. I forgot however that I was just over the parlour, where every evening Mr. Elson sat, either smoking & chatting with the Captains, or reading alone. Long after I was told that my prayers above were a frequent subject of jocose remark, it being supposed that I was "practising"; though no such thought had ever entered my mind: I was quite guileless, simple, and unsophisticated in the whole matter.

After a while, indeed, I think before the year 1833 had passed, I began to take part in the public Prayer-meetings held on week-evenings in the Chapel. And in the course of the following summer I was persuaded by the Wesleyan Minister to attempt service for Christ as a Local Preacher: walking down to ~~Cohopit~~ Otterbury, a hamlet on the North Shore, 8 or 10 miles distant, on a Sunday morning. Here one Johnny Parsons, a simple fisherman, unlettered but pious, of about 90 years of age, dwelt, who opened his cottage for the weekly testimony of Apsey, Jaques, [Philip] Tocque & myself. Mine was of the very feeblest character. I suffered from *mauvaise honte* to an extreme that was ludicrous, yet very painful. I recollect with vivid distinctness, how I used to feel as if my whole subject was an absolute blank before my mind: I could not see two words ahead, of what I was uttering; what I had said instantly disappeared from my view; thus it habitually seemed as if every moment I must utterly break down. And this although I perfectly knew that every one of the 20 or 30 people that were before me was illiterate, simple, confiding; no more able, and with no more thought, of criticising either my language or my reasoning, than the old yellow cat that purred on the hearth. The absolute consciousness of this fact did not in the least prevent or diminish the trembling nervousness with which I always spoke; & which it was several years before I quite lost. I think my early preaching must have been acceptable to God; for no other reason, [but] for this, that so far from gratifying any fleshly forwardness or love of prominence, they were so painful that I invariably shrank from them, and never undertook the work without a self-sacrificing, overpowering sense of duty to Him.

I have, however, anticipated, & will now return to the year 1833.

Immediately after my return from home, I began to keep a methodical meteorological journal; recording the temperature thrice a day by a thermometer hung outside the office window; & after a few months recording the weather also. These records I regularly extracted for Comer, who published them weekly in the *Mercury*. The original journal is still in my possession, continued till my departure from the Island, & resumed in Canada, till I accidentally broke my thermometer. The temperature in Jany. 1833 sank to 5° below Zero; the lowest I had yet known in my six years' experience; but presently exceeded; for on the night of the 13th. of Feb. it went down to -7°. This evening was otherwise noteworthy; for my old flame Jane Elson was then married to a young St. John's merchant, a Mr. Wood.

Since St. John's withdrawal I had held the second place in the office. My standing duty was to take a duplicate copy of the Ledger, in 3 vols. for transmission to the Firm at Poole. This was easy work; for I doubt not that I could have completed them, in a steady effort, in three months, & that without any distressing fatigue. There was additional work, such as occasional copying of letters, & routine jobs; & in the times of pressure (as in the outfits for the Ice & for Labrador, & in the settlement of accounts), I bore my part; yet this probably was not equal to more than three months' more of hard work. So that I had an easy time, & much leisure.

About this time I wrote the Poem, "The Restoration of Israel", which I still have among my mss. It is chiefly interesting, as showing that even then I had received some distinct notions of Unfulfilled Prophecy; for which I think I was largely indebted to the author of "Salathiel". In my *Gems*, vol. ii, I have transcribed a poem by this writer, on the same subject; but I am sure I had not seen this, when I wrote mine.

When I was in England I had bought an 8vo. ms. volume, in which I set myself to transcribe my "Gems". By the 13th. August, I had completed it; & on that day I presented it to my friend St. John, for whom, though altogether without his suspicion, I had undertaken the work. My Letter-book preserves a copy of the letter of this date, which accompanied the gift.

About the same time, in a very slight measure, I realized the fulfilment of Phil. i. 29. "Unto (me) it was *given*, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for his sake". Several of us, with two or three of the Captains, were on the platform, waiting for dinner, when Stanworth, of the "Julia", began making some scoffing, taunting remarks on my religion, to the amusement of the rest. I was kept in meekness & in peace; comforted by the vivid presentation to my mind of Acts v. 41, "Rejoicing that they were *counted worthy* to suffer shame for his name". I accepted it as a real honour.

My Letter-book of the year shows that from the very first yielding of myself to God, I did not shrink from an open confessing of Christ. To my brother Tom (Nov. 6. 1832; June 22. 1833; Aug. 3; Sept. 20); to St. John (Feb. 19; Mar. 29); to Sam Harrison (May 19. 1834; Sept. 13), to Tom Salter (May 13. 1834); I wrote as one not ashamed of Him. The last two had not, so far as I knew, any disposition towards godliness; therefore to them I took the aggressive [offensive], affectionately but solemnly pressing the claims of God on their consciences.

This series of letters is a valuable mirror of my mind & habits in other respects. It shows how ardently & indefatigably I pursued the branch of Science I had chosen; the enthusiastic delight which I took in it; the progress wh. I made in it — the

commingling, or rather the alternating, of the serious and the jocose, which has ever marked my character.

A passage in one (to S. Harrison, June 24. 1833) alludes to my habit of early rising, & to my enjoyment of the scenery and accompaniments of the opening day. Another (to T.G., Nov. 16) describes my plan of writing on subjects of importance, so as to avoid the omissions and errors of hurry. To the same (March 10. 1834) I illustrate my habit [of] economizing moments of time.

The Entomological Journal for this year throws a good deal [of] light on my history at this time. It was in writing the description of the transformation of a Lacewing Fly (May 25. 1833) that I first became *conscious* of that power of word painting, to which I have already alluded; and first felt a dawning anticipation of future authorship. A certain skill in selecting epithets had then consciously begun. My mind afterwards frequently recurred to this description with pride. The description of Little Beaver Pond in early morning (See June 20th. 1833) — the scene of my sketch wh. hangs in the dining room — was another that specially pleased me.

Mr. Elson was spending the summer in England, which gave a little more license than usual: His eldest son Willm. had recently come from Leghorn, where he had spent several years, & had acquired dissipated habits. He spoke English in a foreign manner — I happened to ask him the Italian for “knife”, when he said, “a pen-knife is ‘temporino’; but such a knife as I have in my hand (a table-knife, I think) is called ‘cultello’ ”; all pronounced exactly as a foreigner would have done, & with a peculiar liquid slurring or doubling the letter *l*. This gave occasion to a nick-name for him; we ever after knew him as “Count di Cultello”; or, more briefly & familiarly, “the Count”. His brother Andrew, a lad of about 16, had just left school; we dubbed him “Andrea del Sarto”, — familiarly “Del Sarto”. Both of them lounged about the office; ostensibly as clerks; but they did almost nothing. They were both fairly agreeable & obliging. They were allowed a small pleasure-boat of their own, which was painted red within, & was called “The Red Rover”, after Cooper’s novel.<sup>50</sup> I had frequent pleasure trips in her; sometimes to Carbonear Island, a pleasant, bushy, lonely spot, uninhabited & a good resort for rare Insects. “The Count” had some experience in collecting; & both of them very kindly aided me; indeed, after a while, even the people of the Town would be on the watch to secure any strange looking insect, for Gosse’s collection. My friend Capt. Hampton was so kind as to collect for me in the ports of Spain, & brought me some interesting things.

I began, & made progress with, the drawings in my “Entomologia Terranovae”, wh. were so scientifically accurate as to elicit the praise of Mr. Kelly, when I showed to him the book at Liverpool, in 1839. Some of the figures are magnified. For this I had brought with me from Poole, two lenses, wh. I managed to mount very decently in bone (from the dinner-table), ground & shaped wholly by myself. I sent one to Tom & kept the other for my own work. They were of the form here shown [on the same page of the original]; the bone about 1/8 inch thick; the lens neatly set in putty. My own lasted me for several years, & rendered me a good deal of valuable service in magnification. I made also a scale for my own use out of an old tooth-brush handle, graduating it on one side to tenths, and on the other side to twelfths, of an inch. This, which has done me service for many years, I still possess.

I sent duplicates of my collection to Sam Harrison and to my brother Tom: the latter in 3-shelved boxes of my own making. Each of them also sent me English

Insects in return. S.H. sent me some implements for collecting, & Rennie's "Alphabet of Insects".<sup>51</sup> Mr. Elson also brought me on his return in the autumn, Rennie's *Conspectus of Butts. and Moths*<sup>52</sup> (a far more valuable book, but a bare-faced piracy), and other works on Nat. Hist., which he had kindly procured on my order.

In my Journals, I made, at the end of each year, a Retrospect of the Season. In that of this year I profess to "have gained a good stock of valuable scientific information, as well from books as from observations". And the statement did not exceed the truth.

The keeping of these successive scientific Journals I look back upon with very much satisfaction. They contained a fund of information, interesting & valuable even now. They were of the greatest use to me: they created, or at least confirmed, the habit of precision in observation & record; they gave facility in authorship; and they accumulated an ever augmenting & available store of facts.

My friend Sprague had spent the summer in England, & had collected insects for my cabinet. He was returning in the "Perseverance", so late in the autumn that the tempestuous adverse winds compelled them to put back, & he did not come out till the following May. Sprague told me that the Captain of the "Perseverance", Thomas Roe, a ribald & profane young fellow, annoyed at the persistent opposing wind, would stand on the quarter-deck, shake his fist against the sky, & loudly "damn the wind, and Him that sent it". It is worthy of note that the very next time Roe went to sea, after this; neither his ship nor he was ever heard of more. For that once he was permitted to return in safety; for he carried one, who, though not then converted to God, was a vessel of mercy in the Divine decrees.

The year closed socially in ominous thunders. Ever since the Colonial Legislature had been granted, the Irish Popish party, stirred by demagogues, & more privately by their priests had been striving to get a monopoly of power. Party spirit ran high: Protestants went in mortal fear; for the Irish vastly outnumbered us, & everywhere dark, threatening glances and muttering words beset us. One St. John's newspaper, "the Public Ledger", was on the Protestant side, & its Editor, Henry Winton, was an able & a fearless advocate, & was in consequence much hated. He was, in the course of the winter, round in the Bay, collecting his accounts, and one night, walking alone from Carbonear to Harbour Grace, he was suddenly seized in a lonely spot by several fellows, one of whom cut off both his ears. The news next day caused a great sensation; every Protestant looked in his neighbour's frightened face, & asked, "What next?" A sort of inquiry was made, but it issued nothing. My brother William tells me that it was the act of Dr. Molloy, a surgeon of Carbonear, with whom we were intimate.

The state of things which prevailed was much like that in Ireland during the late Fenian conspiracy, or during the present Home Rule agitation. In fact our social state pulsated with Ireland's. Dan O'Connell<sup>53</sup> was at the height of his demagogy; & large contributions were being sent home from Newfoundland to "the O'Connell thribbit" (tribute). Newfoundland was becoming a very unpleasant place to live in.

My friend Sprague arrived in May, & brought me the three collections of Insects made by himself, by S. Harrison, & by my Brother Tom. Sprague himself was bitten with the mania of collecting, & we helped each other. During the season I made some valuable additions to my collection, by my own expeditions, & by the contributions of many friends, some of them comparative strangers.

“The Count” was at St. Mary’s in the summer, & promised to remember me, wh. promise he performed. Martin paid us a visit, & invited me to make an entomological excursion there, for which he engaged to give me every facility. I thought that in the wooded region there around, I might be successful. The plan was entertained; Mr. Elson gave a ready permission; & all was arranged for my taking a passage thither in our Brig “Cornhill”, which was due from Poole early in August. She did not come, however, till the end of the month, when I thought it too late.

In October, I received from my friend Capt. Hampton, who had had it made at Hamburg, by my order & strictly according to my written description, a Cabinet for Insects, 3 feet high, 3 feet long, & 2 feet wide, with 12 drawers, & folding doors. It was ill-planned; the drawers were not corked, & therefore the specimens were pinned into the wood (which was deal throughout); the substance was but slight; & so when I came to travel, I found it very unsatisfactory. However, it served its turn; & my pursuit of science was truly “under difficulties”. Perhaps not a soul in the country had ever attempted to study its Entomology before: I had no museums, no cabinets, to refer to: for identification, I had but the terse, highly condensed, intensely technical generic characters from Linnaeus’s *Systema Naturae* in the article “Entomology” in Tegg’s “London Encyclopedia”, which was in our library. These characters I copied out, & have still: they were of great value: I studied them most intently; was often puzzled, discouraged, but ever returned to the attack. I made many mistakes, which were gradually corrected. Experience taught me many things; the want of books cast me more upon nature; & so I struggled on, constantly increasing my acquaintance with the Divine handiwork, & laying a solid foundation for book-knowledge, whenever it might fall in my path.

My desk in the office was against one of the windows; & in the window-sill, close to my right hand, I kept my card-covered tumblers, in which I watched the development and transformation of many species, while at my work. Mr. Elson never made the slightest objection to this; & many a fact I learned from these simple apparatus.

I read in our library the *Life & Correspondence of Sir James E. Smith*,<sup>54</sup> which his intimacy with Linnaeus made very interesting.

In the beginning of April my friend St. John was taken with Scarlet fever & brought to death’s door. I hastened to see him; & as I stood by his bed-side, his face attenuated by illness, his beard unshaved for many days, struck me so painfully that I burst into uncontrollable weeping. I however read to him, from the Scriptures, & from Wesley’s Hymns; & sought to point him upwards. He anticipated death, & commended his wife and three infant children to my care, which I solemnly promised. He recovered, however, & refers to his own recollections; & to my letters on the occasion.

During the summer the fir-woods between Carbonear & Harbour Grace were on fire; & for several nights presented a very striking but awful spectacle from the town, all along the ridge of the South Side. Mr. Pack suggested to William a picture, in which the burning woods in front, the Moon above, and the *Aurora borealis* behind (!) should combine their lights. The artist, however, did not encourage the proposal.

I think I have mentioned that I took part in the singing gallery at the Wesleyan Chapel. William led the instrumental part with the first Violin. Other chaps & a few young ladies swelled the Choir. One evening in the week we met to practise in the

gallery; I recollect that, after one such evening, we all walked to Harbour Rock, a commanding eminence overlooking the harbour, and standing there, sang a Hymn under the stars, before we separated.

Sprague & Fuller in like manner had attached themselves to the choir of the Church, & practised there on Saturday evenings. One night in winter (but I am not sure of the year) a curious contretemps occurred. The parish clerk, one Loader, was a character. He kept a school, but was illiterate. His office, of course, made incumbent on him a high protestantism. He would come to the counting house, & glancing up at the Romish Chapel, with a patronizing smile on us, would talk of "them misguided Papishes, ye know!" One stormy Sunday, the clergyman had not ventured over from Hr. Grace, & Loader thought it a fine chance for his own ministrations. He ran into his own house, close by, & returning with a book, mounted the pulpit, and read a burning, red hot sermon of the most denunciatory character, against Popery. "Then there was Hildebrand, or rather Firebrand", &c. &c. — the whole read out, in a miserable, limping style, but with strong emphasis on the more libeling passages. If anyone else in the town had ventured half as far, probably his ears would have been worth no more than luckless Winton's, the Editor; but the Irish only laughed: "it was but poor Loader, the clerk!"

Worse than this, however, he was a confirmed sot. And this brings me back to my story. Our lads, coming from practice, one winter's night, when the snow was deep, see, dimly, something lying in the ditch. They go to it, & lo! it is Loader, lying helpless on his face, in the snow. "Why, Mr. Loader, is this you? What's the matter?" "Let me alone!" "Can we help you, Mr. Loader? You mustn't lie here, you know." "G'alaung, ye imperdent fellers! I'm a looking — for — something! Go 'laung!" I believe they managed to drag him to his own door, much against his will, & amidst his maudlin protestations.

In the autumn and winter I was much occupied with hymn-tunes in concert with Fuller. I composed a tune, to which he set a treble & bass; I named it "Selina", wh. was his mother's name. I made, ruled & filled the book entitled HYMN TUNES copied by P.H. GOSSE, during this autumn & winter, in which "Selina" is included.

I have more than this to record, however, of my two young friends, Sprague & W.F. Lush. One evening this autumn, I had a very serious conversation with them together on spiritual things; in which I dealt with their consciences, and earnestly sought to persuade them to be Christians. They both were much affected, and engaged to yield themselves to God. In a few days Fuller, who had been brought up religiously, relapsed and remained careless; but Sprague, who had had no such advantages, persevered; never went back at all; ultimately became a regular Wesleyan Minister, which he is to this day. In one of his letters to me, he says, "You may consider me . . . as your 'own son in the gospel.'" The first God ever gave me!

This autumn I got from England, the S.P.C.K.'s most valuable little Treatise on Structural Botany; & Wilson's "American Ornithology" (Constable's Edition in 4 vols.),<sup>55</sup> which latter was both here & in Canada, of great value to me.

My indentured engagement with the Firm had expired in the spring of 1833. Since then I had remained on, with no expressed agreement, as a copyer; and was receiving £50 per ann., besides board & lodging. Hitherto I had formed no plans for the future, except the castles in the air mentioned at p. [249]. About this time, however, my friends Mr. & Mrs. Jaques, their mercantile business not being very successful,

were turning their eyes towards Upper Canada as a residence. Mr. J. had met with some very flaming accounts of the fertility of the regions around Lake Huron, & of the certainty of success being attained in agriculture by emigrants settling there. They determined to remove thither, & begin life in a western forest in that capacity. My friendship with them, had by this time become very close: I could not bear the thought of parting with them; the weight that hung over social life in the Island, from the ever increasing rancour of the Irish party made Newfoundland distasteful to me: I also was fired by the highly coloured reports of the Emigration books, & thought that, as I was young & strong, I was sure to make a good farmer. Then, too, there was the charm of the unknown; of life in totally new conditions; the romance of the Far West, of the boundless primeval forests!

But under & behind all these, there was with me another motive power, unconfessed & never even uttered, yet stronger than all. I had pretty well exhausted Entomology in Newfoundland; it was a cold, barren, unproductive region: I longed to try a new field. One of the numerous works which we read on Canada this autumn, for we eagerly devoured everything we could find, was a gossiping, pleasant book by a lady, in which she described enthusiastically & with much detail, though not scientifically, the insects & familiar flowers of Upper Canada.<sup>56</sup> The descriptions were so attractive as to fire my imagination; & thenceforth the time seemed long till I could wield my butterfly net in the Canadian forest.

Such was the vigorous faith with which I calculated on success in these untried conditions, that I straightway proposed to my aged parents, my sister, & my brother Tom, that they should engage to pack up their belongings in England, & come out to live under my lordly protection in Canada! Not immediately indeed, but "in a year or two, when I have by God's blessing, got up a house on my Estate, for them to come to". Tom I urged with strong appeals to join me; telling him, in all good faith as I had read & myself believed, "the land where I go is exceedingly fertile & productive, & *with little more than half the toil necessary on an English farm*, will yield not only the necessaries, but the luxuries of life". How different we found it!

In the spring of 1835 I received replies. Tom ardently responded; but my Mother & Sister had no such enthusiasms; & not only refused to entertain my invitation, but sought strongly to dissuade me from what seemed to them a mad scheme. Under those circumstances (Lett. Bk. to T.G., May 6. 1835), I thought right to let the plans stand in abeyance till I had personally tried the experiment. In this letter I detail my means & my anticipations; I looked to start with £100 Curry. to buy 100 acres at 10/- per acre, payable by annual instalments in 5 years; viz. £10 per an. to clear 20 acres at 30/- — £30; erect a loghouse £7; buy stock £20; expenses £10. Total, £77, for the first year, when I hoped to have some returns. My letter proves that I was myself recognizing the Lord in what I was doing, & that I strongly counselled Tom to do so too.

Pretty well every evening I now spent, and every Sunday, with my friend Jaques; eagerly reading every scrap of information about Canada and emigration, forming our plans, and discussing our prospects. One evening, on coming home, as Mr. Elson had not left the parlour, I went in, and formally announced my intention of leaving. It happened to be a severely cold night, the effect of which was to benumb my organs of speech, causing a thickness of pronunciation; which, as I was painfully conscious, was just like that of a drunken man. He, however, made no remark; received my

notice with coldness; made no remonstrance; expressed no sorrow at parting with me, nor any allusion to my eight years' service. He had a great contempt for personal religion; & I think was not pleased at my profession of it: I was indirectly informed that he said of me, on the occasion of my leaving, that "he had never liked the man"; without assigning, however, any reason. I see, with some regret & shame, that I had never set myself to please him; doing, like most of my compeers, no more than I could help, of duty, & seeking to please myself.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>We leave the boundaries and sweet ploughlands of home,  
We flee our homeland.

Virgil, *Eclogues*, I, 3-4.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Bickersteth, *A Scripture Help* (London, 1816).

<sup>3</sup>David Hume, *The History of England*, 6 vols. (London, 1762).

<sup>4</sup>Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man* (London, 1732-34).

<sup>5</sup>A turn of phrase: Roland and Oliver, two paladins of Charlemagne in the *chansons de geste*, were the equal of one another in arms and fought a prolonged and undecided combat.

<sup>6</sup>See Horace, *Satires* II, vii, 85-86:

Responsare cupidinibus, contemnere honores

Fortis, et in se ipso totus, teres, atque rotundus.

Who has courage to say no again and again to desires, to despise the objects of ambition, who is a whole in himself, smoothed and rounded.

<sup>7</sup>Joe Miller's *Jests: or, the Wit's Vade-Mecum* (London, 1739).

<sup>8</sup>S.T.H. Parkes, *A Chemical Catechism* (London, 1806).

<sup>9</sup>On all matters and certain others.

<sup>10</sup>Gosse leaves blank the time of dinner, customarily taken at mid-day.

<sup>11</sup>*Henry IV, Part I*, II.i.

<sup>12</sup>The Library of Entertaining Knowledge was composed of a series of volumes on practical subjects published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. See also William Bingley, *Animal Biography: or, Popular Zoology*, 7th ed. (London, 1829); John Leonard Knapp, *The Journal of a Naturalist* (London, 1829); *Popular Zoology, Comprising Memoirs and Anecdotes of the Quadrupeds, Birds and Reptiles in the Zoological Society's Menagerie* (London, 1832).

<sup>13</sup>Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus.

Non omnes arbusta iuvant humilesque myricae;

Si canimus silvas, silvae sint consule dignae.

Virgil, *Eclogues*, IV, 1-3.

Muses of Sicily, let us attempt a rather more exalted theme. Hedgerow and humble tamarisk do not appeal to all. If we must sing of woodlands, let them be such as may do a Consul honour.

<sup>14</sup>*Twelfth Night*, IV, ii.

<sup>15</sup>Philip Henry Gosse, *An Introduction to Zoology* (London, [1844]), vol. I, pp. 110-14; J. B. Jukes, *Excursions In and About Newfoundland, During the Years 1839 and 1840* (London, 1842), vol. I, pp. 250-322.

<sup>16</sup>Newfoundland distinguished between local currency and sterling. The gold Spanish dollar was a major trading unit recognized by other countries.

<sup>17</sup>All British naval and merchant seamen contributed monthly from their pay towards the upkeep of the Greenwich Royal Hospital.



<sup>18</sup>[Philip Henry Gosse], "The Mouse a Lover of Music," *Youth's Magazine*, n.s. 11 (1826): 239-40.

<sup>19</sup>"Tales by the O'Hara Family," by the brothers John and Michael Banim, which appeared in 1825.

<sup>20</sup>Gosse mistakenly refers to Gerald Griffin, *The Collegians* (London, 1829).

<sup>21</sup>The rest of Part I, concerned with the Taylors and the Pikes, Gosse has struck out.

<sup>22</sup>William Scoresby, *An Account of the Arctic Regions, With a History and Description of the Northern Whale-Fishery* (Edinburgh, 1820).

<sup>23</sup>George Croly, *Salathiel: A Story of the Past, the Present and the Future* (London, 1829).

<sup>24</sup>Jukes, vol. 2, p. 30 ff., where he refers to Davis as John Davis.

<sup>25</sup>Philip Henry Gosse, *The Canadian Naturalist: A Series of Conversations on the Natural History of Lower Canada* (London, 1840), pp. 43-44.

<sup>26</sup>Genesis 6:4.

<sup>27</sup>He pulled the lump out. *Frustratim* appears to be a coinage of Gosse's.

<sup>28</sup>See pocket map in J. B. Jukes, *General Report of the Geological Survey of Newfoundland . . . During the Years 1839 and 1840* (London, 1843).

<sup>29</sup>James Morier, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba, of Ispahan* (London, 1824).

<sup>30</sup>Perhaps William O'Regan, *Memoirs of the Legal, Literary, and Political Life of . . . John Philpot Curran . . . Comprising Copious Anecdotes of His Wit and Humour* (London, 1817), or one of the many other books about Curran's wit, and one of the numerous editions of the *Letters of Junius* (London, 1769).

<sup>31</sup>George Cruickshank (1792-1878), satiric artist and caricaturist.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Church-yard" (1751), l. 12.

<sup>33</sup>Sir William Parry, *Journal of a Third Voyage for the Discovery of the North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific; Performed in the Years 1824, 25* (London, 1826), containing zoological notes by Lt. J. C. Ross; Sir John Franklin, *Narrative of a Second Expedition to the Shores of the Polar Sea, in the Years 1825, 1826, and 1827. . . . Including an Account of the Progress of a Detachment to the Eastward, by J. Richardson* (London, 1828).

<sup>34</sup>Alexander Wilson, *American Ornithology* (Edinburgh, 1826-35).

<sup>35</sup>Isaac Watts, *The Improvement of the Mind: or, A Supplement to the Art of Logic* (London, 1741).

<sup>36</sup>*The Little Warbler of the Cottage, and Her Dog Constant*. By a Lover of Children (London, 1816).

<sup>37</sup>Samuel Johnson (1709-84), writer and moralist, whose syntactical parallelisms and latinate diction contribute to a heavy style known as "Johnsonese."

<sup>38</sup>*The Carbonear Star and Conception Bay Journal*.

<sup>39</sup>Thomas Campbell's "Battle of Hohenlinden," which commemorates a battle in which the revolutionary general Moreau defeated the Austrians.

<sup>40</sup>Epic poems purported to be translated from the Gaelic poet Ossian but actually reconstructions by James Macpherson (1736-96).

<sup>41</sup>Probably Mary Jane Jewsbury, *Lays of Leisure Hours* (London, 1829).

<sup>42</sup>Nathaniel Parker Willis, American writer and poet whose biblical paraphrases were circulated widely in the magazines.

<sup>43</sup>Isaac Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (London, 1829).

<sup>44</sup>*Richard III*, i.i.

<sup>45</sup>George Adams, *Essays on the Microscope*. With considerable additions and improvements by Frederick Kanmacher, 2nd ed. (London, 1798).

<sup>46</sup>Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible . . . with Explanatory Notes* (London, 1828); James H. Hervey, *Works* (Edinburgh, 1769); Grace Kennedy, *Works* (Edinburgh, 1827).

<sup>47</sup>John Dobell, *A New Selection of More Than Eight Hundred Evangelical Hymns*, 4th ed. (London and Poole, [1825]).

<sup>48</sup>Romans 7:17-18: Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me./For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

<sup>49</sup>Thomas Tegg, *Book of Utility* (London, 1822).

<sup>50</sup>James Fenimore Cooper, *The Red Rover, a Tale* (London, 1827).

<sup>51</sup>James Rennie, *Alphabet of Insects* (London, 1832).

<sup>52</sup>James Rennie, *A Conspectus of the Butterflies and Moths Found in Britain* (London, 1832).

<sup>53</sup>Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), successful agitator for Irish constitutional reform.

<sup>54</sup>Lady Pleasance Smith, ed., *Memoir and Correspondence of the Late Sir James Edward Smith* (London, 1832).

<sup>55</sup>Alexander Wilson, *American Ornithology*, ed. R. Jamieson, in *Constable's Miscellany*, vols. 68-71 (Edinburgh, 1826-35).

<sup>56</sup>Gosse had probably read Catherine Parr Traill's *Backwoods of Canada* (London, 1836), published in the first instance in the Library of Entertaining Knowledge, a series with which he was quite familiar. He appears to have the chronology wrong.

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