

THE HOME AS IT WAS TEN YEARS AGO.

MISS RYE'S GIRLS' HOMES.

BY THE RIGHT HON. THE MARQUESS OF LORNE, K.T.

ON one of the cold, dull mornings of March there was a large group of persons collected on the platform of a railway station. There was the usual bustle among the busy porters, who were seeing everybody and everything into the proper place. There were many people taking leave of their friends, as though they did not expect to see them again for a long time; but, amid all the stir, the group of people I have mentioned were quietly waiting. They were evidently also bound on a journey, and meant to go by the train which was about to start for Liverpool. But before they left London there was someone expected to whom they wished to say good-bye. There are among them some grown-up persons, but most of the group we have noticed are very young. They are all girls, nicely dressed, and cloaked to keep away

the cold. They are evidently very fond of the ladies who have accompanied them to the station, and one of these ladies is going with them on their journey, so it is with the others that they are talking about saying farewell. Presently the talk is hushed, and they all look in the direction in which some gentlemen are approaching them. Among these gentlemen is one very tall and stately; he is evidently a man who has seen many years, but he is still very handsome, and holds himself as well as if he were only thirty. The expression of his face is a very noble one, and his hair is still dark, and his step firm. With his friends around him, he comes rapidly to the waiting group of ladies and little girls.

They seem all to know him and love him well, for he is one of their best and kindest friends. The girls make a curtsy to him, and he greets them all as though they were his children. No wonder that they are glad to see him, and that they love and revere him, for this handsome old man, with the strong features and the soft heart, is one who is known all over London and all over England, wherever there is suffering to be soothed, good to be done, and help to be given to the helpless. It is Lord Shaftesbury who has come to see his little friends off. He talks to all of them, and hopes that they will be happy in the great new land to which they are going, for they are to be taken away across the ocean to another land, a land called Canada.

They have been told a good deal about this country already, and are not a bit afraid of the journey. They are to go to Liverpool, in the north of England, and will arrive there in about six hours after leaving London. Then they are to go on board a big steamer, and are to have eight or ten days upon the sea.

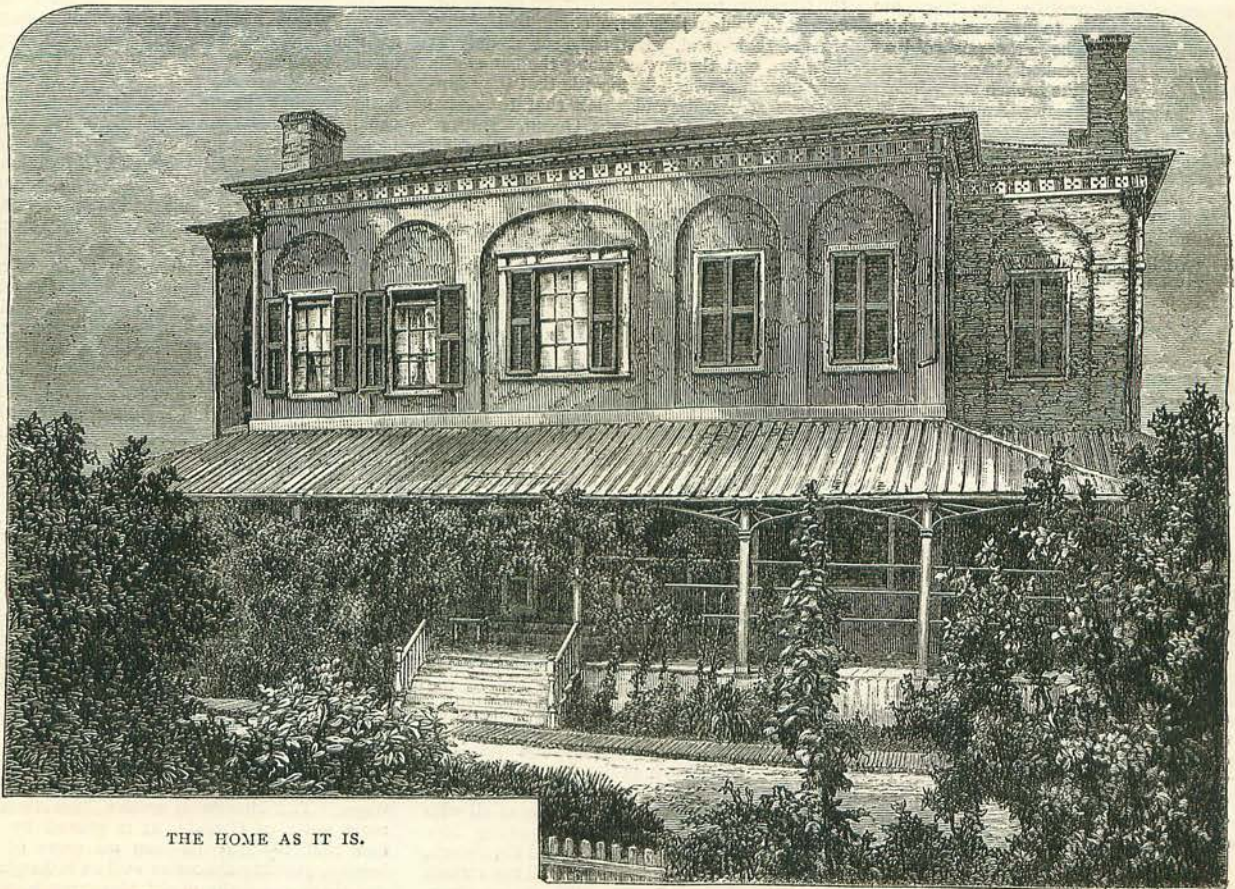
None of them have ever seen the open sea before, but they have heard of its beauty and majesty, and how the long broken lines of waves flow over its blue and grey surface, and how, when fairly upon it, one can see no shore, and nothing but water, water everywhere. All round them there will be nothing but the moving waters, with the skies above coming down to meet the distant line of the waves upon the horizon. Some of the children are sure not to like it at first, for they will be very sea-sick, but they are told that after a little time this feeling will wear off, and then they will have such good appetites that they will wish to have five or six dinners each day! After all, many people do not like the motion until they are accustomed to it of a swing, and yet how soon girls become accustomed to it, and delight in being swung up and up, and then to feel the rush through the air as they come back again! The motion of a ship at sea is not nearly so trying as that! Now the time has come for the train to start, and with many a "God bless you!" from Lord Shaftesbury the adventurous girls take their places in the train, and away it steams out of the station away to the North. Most of these girls will not come back again to England, for they will like best to remain in their new homes, so there is a good deal of sadness among their friends whom they leave behind.

But their relatives and others who care for them know it is for their good that they depart, and they are sure they will hear good news of them. So we will follow them, and show what sort of a journey and voyage they have. By the time they get to Liverpool they are either very sleepy or have woken from a good nap in the train, and are a little puzzled at seeing the quantity of ships in the River Mersey. To be sure, in the Thames they may have seen as many, but at Liverpool the houses do not crowd down so near the water's edge, so that a wider view is obtained of the river, and of the tangle of masts all along the banks, and of the great steamers, with funnels painted red, and white, and black, which are lying at anchor in the middle of the channel.

The kind lady who has taken charge of the children says that the steamboat agent has just told her that one of the biggest of these vessels, having a red funnel with a narrow black and white ring painted round it, is the steamer which is to take them across the



AS THEY WERE.



THE HOME AS IT IS.

Atlantic Ocean. Soon all have to get out of the railway carriages, and a little steamer takes them to the big one which has been pointed out to them. How big it looks! Such steep black sides, with the long rows of little round windows called portholes! A stair, made like a ladder with broad steps, is seen to hang slanting down the side. At a little distance it looks such a narrow place to climb up, but when once on it the children find that there is quite a broad passage by it

up into the vessel; and once on the deck of the ship they see that there is a cord netting all round to prevent careless people from falling or slipping off, and there are many little houses of one storey only in height on the ship between the great masts and the enormous funnel, which is already blowing out a lot of smoke. The word is passed to start, and before the girls have seen their rooms on board they find the shores and houses of the town and the other ships all gliding away from them; for their own ship is moving, and before they have ceased to wonder at the sight, Liverpool is quite far away, and there are only low sandy banks to be seen on each side of the wide river, and they are told that it is time to look at their rooms in which they are to sleep.

These are found to be nicely furnished with berths or beds fixed to the side of the cabin, with a board at the side of each bed, so that if the ship rolls, there may be no chance of the girl rolling on to the floor! And now after so much excitement and novelty all go fast asleep, and we may look at them and hear from the lady in charge where they came from. She says that they are nearly all Londoners, and very many are orphans. Their parents had lived in the East End of the great city, and dying had left the poor children helpless and likely to grow up without any proper care and teaching. Several had been taken from their little playmates in the alleys and dirty streets, and had never known what it is to see green fields and a sky unclouded by smoke. It was not pleasant to think of the future life many of their little friends who were left behind would have to lead, because there was not sufficient money to take more out to Canada. It is earnestly to be hoped that more wealthy people will follow the example of that noble lady, Miss Rye, in founding girls' homes in Canada, whither as many little girls as possible should be sent, if

only good care be taken of them on Miss Rye's system when they get there. For if the London children have lost their parents or are friendless or forlorn in the streets, what misery they often experience! Some get some work as seamstresses, and have to toil all day long at very scanty wages; others lead unhealthy lives in stuffy factories. But these are the best. There are many we are told who become bad, and whose characters are never lifted to be worthy of the name of English-woman. The happy and the rich in London should remember all this, and give Miss Rye and Miss MacPherson, or any other lady having such a girls' home, money to make the place larger, so that more may share its benefits.

Miss Rye has had all these little voyagers in a house in a pleasant part of London for some time before she has sent them on their present journey, and has seen that they leave old England in a good state, with healthy bodies, and, as far as she can do so, she has seen that they shall have healthy minds also. When they wake the next morning our young friends see land, and they are told that this is the last time they will see the old world, for that land is Ireland, and after leaving the shores of that country there is nothing but sea all the way to America. There is soon a great deal of sea-sickness among the children, but in two or three days they brighten up wonderfully, and are taken on deck, where they see the great sails set, and such a quantity of smoke coming from the funnel, and leaving a long dark line in the wake of the ship. The waves seem very high, and their tops are white as they rush after the vessel, which rises as they come and lets them pass under her. Gulls are following, and the children are allowed to toss bits of broken biscuit into the water, and then see how the pretty white birds turn their heads on one side as they fly along, and, closing their wings, dart down—sometimes two or three at a time—to pick up the morsel of food.



ONE OF THEM AFTER TRAINING.

Further on, during another day, they are brought on deck again to see curious white islands in the sea. The air seems cold as these islands of high peaked shapes are approached. They look like broken snow-heaps and icicles floating in the water. And that is just what they are. They are tall pieces of ice which are as big as St. Paul's Church, in London, and one can only see a part of them, for there is much more hidden under the blue waves, which are dashing up in spray all round the line where ice and water meet. They, too, are on a long journey; but they have come from the far-away North, and from no smoky town, but from a country which is mostly covered with thicker ice than a girl can imagine. Think of ice thicker than Somerset House, or the whole height of the Crystal Palace! This is what the ice is like in Greenland, whence these icebergs come. In that country you see ice which looks as though an endless number of Crystal Palaces stretched away right and left, as far as the eye can see, and this mass of ice comes down to the shore in many places; and when summer arrives, these pieces as big as St. Paul's break away and float off southward, and get in the way of steamers, who don't like to run against them in the night, for the ice is harder than the ship, which might get a hole knocked into her by running against an iceberg, and then there would be danger of going to the bottom of the sea instead of to Canada! So a good watch is kept, and the steamers pass quickly by them, and are glad to see their beautiful shapes, and notice the green colour of the cracks in these floating hills, in the daytime, rather than to meet them looking like vast white sails in the night. The eight or ten days soon pass, and again shores are seen on each side of a river, but the river is miles wide.

It is called the St. Lawrence, and is one of the widest, although it is not one of the largest, rivers in the world. Many of the passengers think it very pleasant to get again into a calm channel, and they are all anxious to see the first Canadian town. There it is, shining in a thousand points of light around a hill, like the jewels that an Indian girl wears on her forehead. Trumpets are calling from the top of the hill as the ship passes it, and the children are told that there are soldiers in that place, and that soldiers have been kept there for ever so long, for 200 years, because the place is so beautiful and strong. It is called Quebec; and our little friends are quite sorry that they must now leave the steamer and get into a railway train again. Although there is nobody whom they can like quite so much as Lord Shaftesbury at Quebec, yet there are some very nice gentlemen there who come to see how they are, and in the railway carriages they find that there is a passage down the middle of each, so that they can take a walk in each carriage, and pass from one to another while the train is tearing along at a great speed. What a long railway journey it is! The journey from London to Liverpool is nothing to it. This one lasts for two days, and yet the children are not tired, for they sleep well in the comfortable cars, as the carriages are called. The country they pass is not so green as England, but has far more wood at the back of all the fields. There are no hedges, and the fences are all much rougher than in England. But the fields seem larger, and there seems to be such a lot of land that people do not care to have it all used at once.

How snug and bright the little villages are, and some handsome cities are passed, each looking so much cleaner than towns in England, for there is little smoke, and the air is so full of warm sunshine that each spire, roof, and street sparkles and glows in the cheerful atmosphere. For most of the long journey

the travellers see the great river, up part of the course of which they have come, still alongside of their road. But they see it only at intervals, and then pass along the banks of a very blue lake which is so wide that they cannot see across it, and think that they have arrived again at the Atlantic Ocean. But no, it is all fresh water, and has the beautiful name of Ontario. And now they hear that it is near this great lake that they are going to live in their new girls' home, but they are to be close also to a big river, and to the most magnificent waterfall in the world—the cataract of Niagara. What a pleasure to have such scenes around one! What a change after the noise, dust, wind, and smoky vapour of London. And they find their friends have not told them half of the charms of their new home. They have but a very short way to go from the station to reach it, and they walk there clapping their hands with pleasure at the green country they see with its fruit orchards, and fields of tall beautiful Indian corn, and numbers of fine tall trees like the plane trees in the London parks. And when they get to the house, they find that they have it all to themselves. There are other houses near, but they are a field or two away. There is a gallery in front, all festooned and covered with trailing plants, and such a nice garden, with many flowers in bloom in the piece of ground near the carriage approach. There are lots of other girls ready to be companions for them, and after a time each of the new comers is shown her own little bed where she is to sleep, and the large common room in which all meet for play and for any grand occasion, such as the visit of a Government inspector. There are books kept, in which is written down the names of all who have ever entered the Home, showing how long they were there, how they did their work, if they were attentive in learning all the various things taught—cookery, arithmetic, reading, writing, sewing, and household duties of all kinds. Then the books not only tell all this, but more, for they mention to whom the girls were sent as “helps,” and what reports were received of them; if they were still with the farmers' families or in service in towns, or if they are married, and the number of those who have got married seems to show that the greater number like to be “helps” to one man for life, rather than “helps” to a family for a while only! All this shows that the authorities in the Home do not lose sight of their pupils, but keep an eye on them as far as they can do so, and are always glad to help them and give them good advice when needed. In the matron's room are photographs and pictures of some of those who have been taught in the institution, and who are now the wives of farmers, proprietors, lawyers, and physicians. These sometimes come back to have a look at the place where they passed some happy months of their childhood, and take an interest in their successors.

One of the gentlemen who takes much interest also in the welfare of the girls is Mr. Plumb, a Senator of Canada, who lives in a pretty house only a little distance away from them. He is always glad to assure everyone who asks him of his good opinion of Miss Rye's Home. He has watched it ever since it was first begun, and he says it has been the means of doing much good. Everybody will be disposed to place reliance on the statements of this gentleman, who has had so long and so varied an experience in public life, and who has taken so much pains to inquire about the establishment, and what has become of its former inmates, seeing himself all the while the whole working of this benevolent and beneficent scheme. He asks most truly, where can there be any comparison between the children's former life and prospects and their present happiness?

The region near their home is healthy and delightful. What a pretty sight it is in the early summer to see the white and pink clouds of blossom on the apple and peach orchards, of which there are so many! Then in the autumn, when the yellow grain is nodding to the light winds from the lake, and the wheat is being gathered, what wonderful harvests of fruit there are! Each bough in the orchards is heavy with peaches, and the men and women gather them and send them off to the markets of the big towns, such as Toronto and New York.

Sometimes the children are taken to see Niagara itself, and may stand on the cliff overlooking the wide, deep gulf, into which the green and white-ridged rapids pour the thunderflood of the mighty river. It is difficult to tear oneself away from the fascination of the never-ceasing rush and roar of the brightly-coloured waterfalls, but there are other sights to be seen in the autumn. Often at this season there are several thousand of Canada's red-coated volunteers drilling near Niagara, and the children may see a sham fight. Sometimes they may have a sail in one of the many boats on the Lake Ontario, and in winter what fun they often have. The snow remains on the ground from the end or middle of December to the end of March, but it is all dry, and it is impossible to get one's feet wet in it, except, indeed, during a thaw, and such thaws come very seldom. It is only when the warmth of early spring melts it that the snow is unpleasant for a fortnight. The sun is, however, so powerful, that the dampness of that time soon goes, and winds and sun together dry up the surface of the roads, so that instead of snow there is soon dust on the highways. The climate is milder here than in most parts of Canada, as is proved by the fact that ivy may be seen on some of the houses, growing almost as well as in England, and there a quantity of old May trees brought in old days by French soldiers from France, and these thrive as though they were in Europe.

It is difficult to say which season is the pleasantest. For my part I like the winter, so long as the snow is dry, and there can be sliding down the hills on little sledges, and tramps on snow-shoes over the fields whose fences are half hidden in the white covering. But the early summer and autumn months are all that can be desired, and healthiness is the unvarying character of the district. There are no fevers, no agues, very little rheumatism, and even of the stock of colds there is much less kept on hand than in England during an English winter.

Altogether, no one who has seen the Home and the children in London, and the children at Niagara, can for one moment doubt that the change made in their fortunes by removal under Miss Rye's care has been the means, under Providence, of ensuring for them a useful, healthy, and happy life. If anyone can have a chance of improving the conditions of their existence by emigrating (and how few comparatively are the failures) these children have the best chance. All thanks and honour then to Miss Rye, for her ceaseless care in promoting so sure a condition of improvement! Instead of two or three of such institutions as hers, there should be a thousand of them.

