

# The Routledge Concise History of Canadian Literature

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For Sara



### The two cultures of Rosanna Leprohon's *Antoinette De Mirecourt* (1864)

If in *Wacousta* it is the body itself which is dismembered, in gory scenes of interracial and fratricidal conflict and terror which symbolize the psychological trauma that needs to be sublimated, in Rosanna Leprohon's *Antoinette De Mirecourt* it is literally the territory of French Canada that undergoes postwar dismemberment. As the narrator writes: "The islands of Anticosti and Magdalen, as well as the greater part of Labrador were annexed to the government of Newfoundland; the islands of St. John and Cape Breton were joined to Nova Scotia; and finally New Brunswick was detached, and endowed with a separate government and the name it bears today" (36). Born in Montreal, Leprohon was a prolific poet and short-story writer, publishing in the *Literary Garland* under her maiden name, Rosanna Mullins; her first novel, *Ida Beresford* (1848), was translated into French and serialized in *L'Ordre* (1859–60). Leprohon's *The Manor House of Villerai: A Tale of Canada Under The French Dominion* was serialized in *The Family Herald* (1859–60), and translated into French in 1861; *Armand Durand; or, A Promise Fulfilled* was serialized in the *Montreal Daily News*, and published in book form in 1868 (English edition) and 1869 (French trans.). Leprohon's popularity in French Canada reveals the importance of translation in bridging Anglophone and Francophone cultures. Additionally, her early successes in the *Literary Garland* (which was established in Montreal in 1838, and ran until 1851) are indicative of the importance for women writers of this journal that also paid its contributors. Literary periodicals provided a publishing outlet and a measure of financial independence for authors; examples from across Canada include the *Amaranth* (1841–43) and *Stewart's Literary Quarterly* (1867–72), published in Saint John, New Brunswick; the *Provincial; or, Halifax Monthly Magazine* (1852–53); the *Anglo-American Magazine* (1852–55), published in Toronto; and the *New Dominion Monthly* (1867–79), published in Montreal (see Cambron and Gerson, 127).

That the idea of Canada exists in an in-between or liminal space of abjection is given symbolic form in *Antoinette De Mirecourt* by a "secret" or incomplete marriage between the French Canadian Antoinette De Mirecourt and the rakish British officer Major Sternfield. While Antoinette undertakes the Protestant form of marriage, she does not regard the process as "ratified" until she has had the relationship publicly announced with a Roman Catholic wedding. Once again, a female protagonist is positioned in an interregnum in relation to the strictures of patriarchy: she appears to be courting and thus she is publicly – if temporarily – free of patriarchal power. In the terror of this romance gone wrong, the suspension of certainties are both negative and productive: the interregnum in this novel is a culturally interpenetrated "chora", a secret space which is neither inside nor outside either culture (see Glossary).

With *Antoinette De Mirecourt* chora is also a "legal" space – sanctified but not completed, because only both cultures, at least in the novel in question,

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## Mirecourt

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ce of abjection or incomplete Mirecourt and the takes the Pro- “ratified” until man Catholic interregnum in and thus she is of this romance productive: the ora”, a secret ssary). sanctified but el in question,

can make it whole. In other words, the conjoining of the two cultures needs to be made public to progress from the uncertainties of the liminal space. Clearly, the plot and the characters therein thus carry a symbolic charge which far exceeds the “action”; for example, the repetition of marriage, which will lead to ratification, symbolizes a desire to repeat the settlement of the Seven Years’ War in “Canadian” terms, to the satisfaction, that is, of both dominant European cultures. Such cultural and political claims are what contemporary philosopher Jean-François Lyotard calls a “*differend*”: a legal situation where each side has an equally valid claim. Any judgment that favours one side will inevitably hurt the other, and so it is with the loss of justice, from a French Canadian perspective, brought about by the imposition by the British of “that most insupportable of all tyrannies, martial law” (34). As the narrator continues: “Despite the terms of the capitulation, which had expressly guaranteed to Canadians the same rights as those accorded to British subjects, the former, who had confidently counted on the peaceful protection of a legal government, were doomed instead to see their tribunal abolished, their judges ignored, and their entire social system overthrown” (34). The suspension or loss of justice means that each situation is a *differend*; even the novel’s rake, Major Sternfield, both abuses and is disempowered by this state of affairs.

If one factor can override the *differend* it is the state of “resemblance”: identification with the Other is a compelling force. Early on in *Antoinette De Mirecourt*, a lineage narrative tells the story of Antoinette’s father, Arthur De Mirecourt, who discovers that an orphaned young woman, Corinne Delorme, distantly related, has fallen in love with him. At first, the love is hidden, and his love for her is “brotherly”; she is “a dear sister” (20) and his “kind little sister” (23). But then Arthur accidentally discovers her true feelings: “Suddenly, through the half open door, his eye fell on a mirror suspended opposite him, on the wall of the library; and clearly reflected in that mirror, was the figure of Corinne Delorme seated on a low stool, apparently in the utter abandonment of grief, her face bowed over some object which she held tightly clasped in her slender fingers, and on which she was showering impassioned kisses. That object was his own miniature, a gift which he had brought his mother from France” (24). This mirror scene triggers Arthur’s “mirror stage”, in that he passes from being a beau to being a husband (from passion to patriarchy). It is Corinne in the mirror’s reflection, but more importantly, the image which she is worshipping, and which is also reflected back to Arthur, is a small portrait – the “miniature” – of himself. What is Arthur seeing here? Corinne appears to be holding Arthur’s image as if it were a religious or sacred icon; such chaste love reflects the sibling terminology, not just of these two characters, but as an important facet of eighteenth-century novels: “... as Gerard Barker has pointed out, lovers in eighteenth-century novels often have ‘a pseudo-sibling relationship that conveniently sublimates the sexual realities of courtship.’ [ ... ] If a man could play the part of a good brother, it guaranteed that he would be a good husband” (Perry, 146). We also have with this scene



the symbolic foregrounding of the importance of familial relations (even though with the subsequent marriage, such relations appear to be incestuous), one which will be re-created in Antoinette's later successful marriage of French and English Canada (the Other turns out to have been more closely related than was first thought – that is, the Other can be domesticated and incorporated into the same). The incest theme, so predominant in eighteenth-century literature, emerges at a time when notions of familial connections, rights and responsibilities were undergoing change. In the gothic genre, incest represents “a kind of experiment with the meaning of blood relations, a testing of limits” (Perry, 388), precisely those limits that were perceived to be under threat as indigenous and European nations intermixed.

### **An allegory of decline: William Kirby's *The Golden Dog* (1877)**

The historical existence of New France is brought to a close in William Kirby's *Le Chien d'Or* (*The Golden Dog*): *A Legend of Québec*, a gothic romance which opens on the ramparts of Quebec in 1748. Poet, novelist, newspaper editor, and prolific letter-writer, Kirby was a founding member of the Royal Society of Canada in 1882. Kirby's loyalist beliefs were expressed across a number of genres, although he is best known for his long narrative poem *The U.E.: A Tale of Upper Canada* (1859) and *The Golden Dog*. Klay Dyer notes that “Kirby remains one of the first English-language Canadian writers to recognize the narrative possibilities in the already romanticized history of French Canada. Connecting him with such prominent 19th-century Québec writers as James McPherson Le Moine and Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, such foresight locates Kirby as an important Victorian commentator on the role of the Canadian imagination within a multicultural and bilingual nation” (581).

In the historical time-frame of *The Golden Dog* the French have recently been defeated in a major attempt to regain Louisbourg which had fallen to New England troops; at an intense sea battle off Cape Finisterre, in the Bay of Biscay, the English fleet destroyed that of the French, but peace between England and France soon followed in 1748 with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, whereby Louisbourg was exchanged for Madras. Eight years of supposed harmony preceded the beginning of the Seven Years' War in 1756; in reality, boundary disputes between Canada and New England continued unabated. *The Golden Dog* suggests that the real threat to New France lies within – indeed a sequence of interior spaces structure the novel, which concerns a double romance, between on the one hand the virtuous, doomed, Amélie de Pentigny and Colonel Philibert, and on the other the murderess Angélique des Meloises who throws over her lover for her desire to marry the Intendant Bigot. In parallel the novel portrays an interior struggle between the commercial activities of the peace-loving Bourgeois Philibert, who leads the business association *Les Honnêtes Gens*, and the corrupt Intendant who leads the war-profiteering Grand Company. This gothic fantasy that explores virtue and

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vice through the foil characters of Amélie/Angélique and Philibert (father and son)/Bigot is complicated by a mysterious woman called Caroline de St. Castin, hiding in a secret chamber at Bigot's palace called Beaumanoir. Angélique does not just see Caroline as a silent rival in her plans to marry Bigot, she also starts seeing her "eidolon" or ghost, whichever way she turns. Caroline is entombed in a gothic chamber or dungeon, one from which she will not escape, as she is eventually murdered: being poisoned and then stabbed. As with *Wacousta* and *Antoinette De Mirecourt*, characters and events carry symbolic weight, creating an allegory of the decline of New France, one which expresses the post-Confederation ideology of Kirby's authorship (Stacey, 101). But why create a narrative with a gothic chora at its heart? How does this affect the allegory of New France's inner turmoil and decline?

As seen above a New World sensibility is explored in the abjected, liminal spaces of gender reversals in the early Canadian novel; with the chora, the threat to the nation is perceived as uncanny. Therefore the interior, homely or domestic shelter is also the site of danger. Perhaps the chora, in a mirroring fashion, is "the fictions that exist at the heart of their national metanarratives" (J.D. Edwards, xix). In other words, "if a nation is imaginary, a precarious fabrication that is built upon questionable cultural narratives, then a nation is also haunted by the spectral figure of its own fabrication" (Ibid.). In wanting the domesticity of marriage with the Intendant, Angélique foregrounds the political nature of that relationship and its potential spatial existence. But the chora undermines this domesticated Eden: it is the uncanny site of murder, of death, that stands behind the public manifestation of a successful polity. The crone commissioned to murder Caroline traverses the entire gothic landscape of forests, towers, stairways, vaults and recesses, before she enters the hidden chamber; the crone figure is often the conveyor of oral history, folk knowledge, and she usually has a cross-cultural identity. Misused folklore is worse than no folklore; so the liminal gothic space becomes a nightmare world which will ultimately destroy all those who come into contact with it. And yet there is worse to come: "Montcalm, after reaping successive harvests of victories, brilliant beyond all precedent in North America, died a sacrifice to the insatiable greed and extravagance of Bigot and his associates, who, while enriching themselves, starved the army and plundered the colony of all its resources. The fall of Quebec and the capitulation of Montreal were less owing to the power of the English than to the corrupt misgovernment of Bigot and Vaudreuil, and the neglect by the Court of France of her ancient and devoted colony" (312-13).

#### Re-defining domesticity: immigration and gender politics in women's autobiographical settler narratives

The abjected liminal spaces of the early Canadian novel were radically re-conceived in relation to immigration, settlement and domesticity in early women's autobiographical writing. Hagiographical biographies of women



were in existence in French-Canada: Father Étienne-Michel Faillon's (1799–1870) hagiographies (the lives of saints) of Madame d'Youville (1852), Margaruerite Bourgeoys (1853), Jeanne Mance (1854) and Jeanne Le Ber (1860; trans. English as *The Christian Heroine of Canada; or Life of Miss Le Ber*, 1861), were highly popular. Abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain's (1831–1904) historical biography *Histoire de la Mère Marie de l'Incarnation* (1964) interprets personal destiny in terms of theology. Such authorized and canonized biographies tended to reinforce the status quo, which in French Canada meant the authority and power of the church. Autobiography adopts more self-reflexive, fictionalizing writing strategies to shape in meaningful ways a woman's notion of herself, and how she is embedded in, and contributes to the construction of, the surrounding society. In other words, it is not just memory that feeds into autobiographical writing, but also story (Grace, 17). From a more political perspective, this mode of writing opens up a space of writing for otherwise silenced or marginalized authors: "[T]he autobiographical voice and eye/I are available to minorities and to groups, such as women, who have been excluded from the dominant discourse and whose stories have been dismissed as worthless" (Ibid., 14). Early Canadian autobiographical texts in English are highly performative, as authors create deliberately entertaining, theatrical accounts of travel narratives, disasters, encounters with Natives and other nationalities and classes, to name just a few. Such a performative genre is conjectural, assembling notions of Canada from partial, fragmentary experiences, which nevertheless are heavily invested in, or are emotionally charged (see Lane 2006a).

### Re-defining domestic space in the writing of Catherine Parr Traill

A prime example of the conjectural impulse is Catherine Parr Traill's (1802–99) *The Young Emigrants; or, Pictures of Life in Canada* (1826), which is constructed from letters received from family and friends, rather than from direct experience. Traill, who was born in Kent, England, was one of five sisters in a family that suffered financial hardship with the death in 1818 of their father Thomas Strickland. Writing was to be a source of income that would help the family survive, with her sisters acquiring fame, if not fortune, for their outstanding work, such as Agnes Strickland's *Lives of The Queens of England* (researched and written with her sister Elizabeth, published in twelve volumes, 1840–48), and Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (published 1852 – see later). Traill's earliest publications reveal her interest in conduct manuals (books that essentially taught young women how to behave in polite society) and personal, moral growth, with texts such as *The Tell Tale: An Original Collection of Moral and Amusing Stories* (1818), *Disobedience; or, Mind What Mama Says* (1819), *Reformation; or, The Cousins* (1819), and *Little Downy; or, The History of a Field Mouse: A Moral Tale* (1822). While conduct manuals would feed into Traill's later Canadian publications, another key interest in her early life was that of natural history, her two most precious possessions

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being Gilbert White's *The Natural History of Selborne* (1789) and Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* (1653–76). Both texts adopt a hybrid format to dig deeply into different aspects of the natural world, including drawn sketches, observational data, stories, anecdotes, poetry and descriptive prose. Gilbert White, for example, opens his book section on The Antiquities of Selborne by imagining a time when Britain "was inhabited only by bears and wolves" (291). Traill's most enduring book can be seen as emerging from these early experiments combined with the experience of emigrating to Canada with her husband Thomas Traill, whom she married in 1832. *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836) with its descriptive subtitle, *Being Letters From The Wife Of An Emigrant Officer, Illustrative Of The Domestic Economy Of British America*, combines multiple genres: it is an immigrant's/settler's conduct book and manual, a natural history, travel narrative, and autobiography. The book can be divided into four main sections: the journey (letters 1 to 7); the settlement (letters 8 to 12); the naming (letters 13 to 17); and the expectation (letter 18) (Ballstadt). While different genres dominate different sections, such as the travel narrative through which Traill writes about her journey, there is also continual discursive hybridity. James calls these "discordant discourses" and they include "discourses of femininity, domesticity, maternity, colonialism, Christianity and scientific rationalism" (2). While domesticity is certainly a discursive construct, it also serves as a central trope in the redefinition of Canada, especially the notion of what it means to write Canada into existence through prose. Traill's approach is to not just make a series of truth claims about her knowledge of Canada, but to re-claim Canadian space from a female perspective. Traill's definition of domesticity, then, filters all other aspects of Canadian existence and identity, including class, race, morality and religion.

Traill repeatedly draws upon the notion of a tabula rasa, a blank surface, to inhabit the natural world that she sees in the foreground: "As to ghosts or spirits they appear totally banished from Canada. This is too matter-of-fact country for such supernaturals to visit. Here there are no historical associations, no legendary tales of those that came before us" (153). The tabula rasa enables Traill to ignore the fact that indigenous peoples and French Canadians already did have a history concerning Canada prior to Traill's arrival. Yet later on she asserts: "If its volume of history is yet a blank, that of Nature is open, and eloquently marked by the finger of God; and from its pages I can extract a thousand sources of amusement and interest whenever I take my walks in the forest or by the borders of the lakes" (155). And yet for all that this grates with the sensibility of the contemporary postcolonial reader, Traill does something quite unique: she claims Canada as a *domestic* space, one which is *not* separate from the discourses of ethics and rationality – that is, one which does *not* allow the domestic space and its inhabitants (mainly women) to become marginalized. Domestic space is not a separate chora, but is instead configured as a contact zone "between four major cultural groups – upper-middle-class English settlers such as Traill, First Nations people,



republican Americans, and, to a lesser extent, lower-class Irish and Scottish emigrants" (James, 8). In other words, domestic space is important in defining and shaping what it means to be Canadian; as Traill puts it in the introduction to her text: "Among the numerous works on Canada that have been published within the last ten years, with emigration for their leading theme, there are few, if any, that give information regarding the domestic economy of a settler's life, sufficiently minute to prove a faithful guide to the person on whose responsibility the whole comfort of a family depends – the mistress, whose department it is 'to haud [hold] the house in order'" (1). The key phrase here is "domestic economy" with its double meaning of a woman's space, and the entire economic space of Canada.

In recoding and reclaiming space, Traill creates a dialectic of hardship/endurance and progress/joy, with a sliding scale from one to the other pole as her narrative progresses. Hardships include leaving one's family and home, the long and dangerous journey to Canada, involving illness and disorientation (even the poorly cleared road to the Traills' land appears to deposit them in the middle of nowhere), and the struggles of building a cabin and clearing land; progress is made through social strength, especially with the concept of the "bee" (the entire community clears land, or helps frame a house, etc.), moral fortitude, and personal development. Social class, while still existing, necessarily undergoes transformation: "here it is considered by no means derogatory to the wife of an officer or gentleman to assist in the work of the house, or to perform its entire duties, if occasion requires it; to understand the mystery of soap, candle, and sugar-making; to make bread, butter, and cheese, or even to milk her own cows; to knit and spin, and prepare the wool for the loom. In these matters we bush-ladies have a wholesome disregard of what Mr. or Mrs. So-and-so thinks or says" (270–71). Canada becomes a personal and social testing ground which has been gifted by God.

In a visit to a resident clergyman, Traill narrates an entire immigrant narrative in condensed and religious form; this religious family has adopted a plain style of living, with their house decorated in "Yankee" fashion. Instead of a piano dominating the sitting-room a more practical spinning-wheel is placed there, and is under use. The simple, homespun mode of dress of the entire family represents "prudence and comfort" (273). The clergyman interprets his immigrant experience via Christian biblical narrative, remembering his first open air service, with the pulpit being "a pile of rude logs", in a church which was "the deep shade of the forest" (280), his sermon being from Deuteronomy: "For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; [ ... ] a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper" (Deut: 8.7 and 9). This notion of emigration being akin to exodus and arrival in a promised land can only function, however, with the concomitant notion of Canada's indigenous peoples being a "vanishing race"; as Traill writes: "I believe it is generally considered that their numbers [Canada's

First Peoples, totally extinct of the earth, hence, even though they existed" (220). Traill's naturalizing of the Native Yet within Traill's narrative many other women are able, excellent, and successfully managing settlers. If this is a healthy, and true representation of the Native men, her own prejudice is evident.

### Sketches from

It is not surprising that Traill compared with her sister, Moodie, in *Bush, or Life in the West*. Traill narrates her own experience, her sister, Moodie, leaving her home in Traill's, the Moodie family, the fourth generation of bush settlers with their neighbors, merely a year ago, now in possession of the bush settlement, sister, although her approach, which is from an American perspective, *Roman Story* in Canada, the *Bush*. Poetry by the American writer about, *Magazine*, and patriotic poet, Canada in 1837 of "sketches" -

Lynch notes that Traill's narrative is always clear, but her genre with focus on that there is of



First Peoples] are diminishing, and some tribes have become nearly if not totally extinct in the Canadas. The race is slowly passing away from the face of the earth, or mingling by degrees with the colonists, till, a few centuries hence, even the names of their tribes will scarcely remain to tell that they once existed" (220). As noted earlier, the narrative of the "vanishing race" is key to naturalizing the negative impact of colonialism upon Canada's First Peoples. Yet within Traill's narrative it is a surprising statement to make because in so many other ways she reveals the local Natives to be enterprising, knowledgeable, excellent business and craftsmen and women, as well as having far more successfully managed the local environment compared with the more recent settlers. If this is a "vanishing race" then they are surprisingly vibrant and healthy, and the most Traill can do to negate their presence is to suggest that the Native men are at times childish, an observation that reveals more about her own prejudicial notions of racial difference than anything else.

### Sketches from the bush: the writing of Susanna Moodie

It is not surprising that Traill's most famous Canadian work should be compared with that of her sister's – Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush, or Life in Canada* (1852) – which, while written some time after the event, narrates her personal experiences as an emigrant and settler. Like her sister, Moodie had also married an officer, Lt. John Wedderburn Dunbar Moodie, leaving Britain just over a year later in 1832 for Canada. Unlike the Traills, the Moodies moved first to a cleared farm near Cobourg, on the fourth concession, Hamilton township, in Upper Canada. Clashing culturally with their neighbours led to a rapid breakdown of relations and a move after merely a year to Douro Township, where they were closer to the Traills, but now in possession of uncleared land. Less temperamentally suited to the life of the bush settler, Moodie narrates a very different story from that of her sister, although in terms of form, she also adopts an aesthetically complex approach, which derives in part from the multiple genres that she was familiar with from an early age, with the publication of her first book, *Sparticus: A Roman Story* (1822). Moodie's poetry was highly successful and well received in Canada, the USA and England, forming a backdrop to *Roughing It in the Bush*. Poetry by Moodie appeared in England in the *Lady's Magazine*, and in the American *Albion* and *Emigrant and Old Countryman*. Her poetry was written about, and published, in the 1834 issue of the *North American Quarterly Magazine*, and she had work commissioned for the *Literary Garland*. Moodie's patriotic poetry, written in response to the rebellion in Upper and Lower Canada in 1837, was particularly popular. But it was another literary form – that of "sketches" – that *Roughing It in the Bush* is built upon.

Lynch notes that the differences between short story and sketch are not always clear, but there is consensus that the sketch is a more personal, anecdotal genre with focus on place, person, or experience (Gerson and Mezei), and that there is often focus "on one subject (a character, a natural event)" (Lynch



2002, 1039). Humorous sketches are the lifeblood of Thomas Chandler Haliburton's (1796–1865) *The Clockmaker, or The Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville* (1837), which was originally published in the *Novascotian* newspaper, and went on to become an international bestseller, even if the series of books that followed did eventually lose impetus and originality. Moodie's main precursor, however, was Mary Russell Mitford's (1787–1855) *Our Village: Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery* (five volumes, 1824–32). Before emigrating, Moodie had produced her own country sketches in *La Belle Assemblée Or Court And Fashionable Magazine* (1827–29), and she continued such work in Canada, publishing her New World sketches in *The Victoria Magazine* and *The Literary Garland*. Lucas argues that these sketches constitute neither "fragments nor haphazardly-ordered fictional interludes" and furthermore, that their conscious chronological re-arrangement in *Roughing It in the Bush* "constitute an integral part of the book's formal and thematic plan" (149). Detailed analysis of the first publication of the sketches, and their place within the version of *Roughing It in the Bush* produced by the Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts, supports this thesis (see Table 3.1).

Moodie's notion of domesticity is that it is a key site of economic production, although one conceived quite differently from that of her sister's (the intersection of travel, autobiography, moral guidance, didacticism and scientific observation); Moodie's "sketches" approach the domestic chora through the cultural interpenetration that first shocks her, and then provides her with valuable literary material. In other words, the large binary oppositions that structure her work – cultured vs. uncultured; Old World vs. New World; civilized vs. the primitive (Lucas, 149) – are eventually problematized as she acculturates to her new surroundings, even if settling is ultimately a personal failure. Thus the *hypercritical* first half of the book gives way to the even

Table 3.1

Chapters	Magazines
1 A Visit to Grosse Isle	(6) Sept. 1847 VM
2 Quebec	(10) Nov. 1847 VM
4 Tom Wilson's Emigration	(4) June 1847 LG
5 Our First Settlement{...}	(3) May 1847 LG
8 Uncle Joe and His Family	(5) Aug. 1847 LG
11 Brian, the Still-Hunter	(8) Oct. 1847 LG
21 Dandelion Coffee (pp. 375{-}378)	(7) Sept. 1847 VM
25 The Whirlwind	(9) Jan. 1848 VM
26 The Walk to Dummer	(2) Mar. 1847 LG
28 Adieu to the Woods	(1) Jan. 1847 LG

*The Victoria Magazine* = VM

*The Literary Garland* = LG

Numbers in parenthesis = periodical publication sequence  
(Lucas, 154; modified by Lane)

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more challenging, but ultimately transformative, creation of a domestic space which is first and foremost protected by Moodie, not her husband, who leaves to join the militia. The transformation has taken Moodie some distance from her first shocking vision of her home: "I gazed upon the place in perfect dismay, for I had never seen such a shed called a house before. 'You must be mistaken; this is not a house, but a cattle-shed, or pig-sty'" (83). The "Yankee driver" she is talking to responds with "You were raised in the old country, I guess; you have much to learn, and more, perhaps, than you'll like to know, before the winter is over" (83). While towards the end of her account Moodie argues that "These government grants of land, to half-pay officers, have induced numbers of this class to emigrate to the backwoods of Canada, who are totally unfit for pioneers" (467), it is the additional, "unwanted" knowledge, that transforms the domestic space into one not just of survival, but achievement and control.

With her husband away as a captain in the militia, many of the Moodies' debts were paid not just by his salary, but by her turn to writing; Moodie, in other words, moves from a situation where she could not write while struggling in the bush, to being the new local head of the household and a writer. Her first payment for writing is described as "the nucleus out of which a future independence from my family might arise" (441). The domestic economy is suddenly booming: with sugar making (and the bartering involved), the production of preserves, and even decorative fungi sold among the officers in the militia. While this also signals the end of her life in the woods, when she does finally leave with her family, to join her husband after his appointment as Sheriff, she now describes the backwoods as "the school of high resolve and energetic action in which we had learned to meet calmly, and successfully to battle with the ills of life" (505).

### The rise of the Canadian popular novel and the role of the popular press

From its beginnings, the Canadian novel had a symbiotic relationship with the popular press. In the June 10 1823 issue of the *Upper Canadian Herald*, a prospectus sought subscribers for a new novel written by Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart (1796–1867), called *St. Ursula's Convent*. Of interest is the fact that this prospectus foregrounded the suitability of Canada as the backdrop (alongside the old countries of England and France) for literary, novelistic, production:

No country presents more interesting subjects for the pen of a Novelist, than Canada. The romantic scenery, the history, and feudal character of the early colonists, their peculiar institutions and customs, the state of society, the habits and manners of the religious orders, the Noblesse and peasantry, derived from their ancestral connexion with France, and their own colonial circumstances, and modified by the introduction of British laws, examples and intercourse, in consequence of the cession of the