

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

LADY DUFFERIN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF VISITS TO GASPE

More than a century ago, in the sixth year of Confederation, the representative of Queen Victoria as Governor-General of the Dominion of Canada, the Earl of Dufferin and his Lady, the Countess Harriet Dufferin, landed at Québec on June 25th.,1873.

Shortly after the arrival of the Vice-Regal couple in Canada they made their first visit to Gaspé and so delighted were they with that experience that during the next five years of their stay in Canada they returned to Gaspé, and its fine salmon rivers, no less than five times. In the course of these visits they came to know well, and to become well known by, many Gaspesians of their time.

Lady Harriet Dufferin would later recall in her interesting and informative book, "MY CANADIAN JOURNAL", her vivid impressions and experiences of five busy and happy years in Canada. Her recollections of visits to Gaspé, reflecting as they do the GASPE OF YESTERDAY, are here recalled in the belief that they are a unique legacy and significant contribution to the Gaspesian heritage.

LADY DUFFERIN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF VISITS TO GASPE

BACKGROUND AND CAREER

A son of the 4th Baron Dufferin, Frederick Temple Blackwood was born in 1826. Educated at Eton and Oxford, he succeeded to his father's peerage in 1841. For eight of the ten years from 1848 to 1858 he served Queen Victoria as Lord-in-Waiting. Then, entering British politics, he served respectively as Undersecretary of State for India and Undersecretary of War.

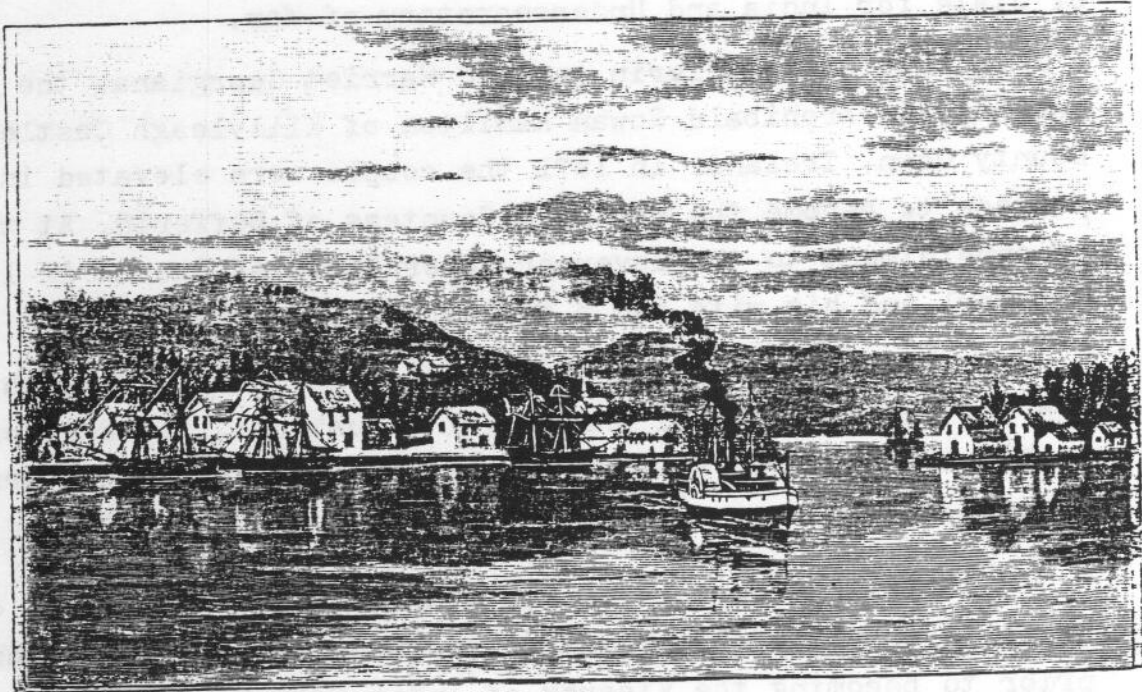
In 1862 Lord Dufferin married Harriet Georgiana, the eldest daughter of Archibald Rowan Hamilton of Killyleagh Castle, County Down, Ireland. In 1871 the couple were elevated in the peerage to become the Earl and Countess of Dufferin. At the time of appointment to the Governor-Generalship of Canada in 1872 the Earl and his wife had a family of five children.

Noted for his tact and good judgment in dealing with delicate and difficult political and social situations, the Earl of Dufferin would be remembered as a very competent and popular Governor-General of Canada.

Following service for his Queen in Canada the Earl of Dufferin was British Ambassador to Russia and then at Constantinople prior to becoming the Viceroy of India from 1884 to 1888. His distinguished service won for him the noble rank of Marquis of Dufferin and Ava in 1888. Over the next decade he was, respectively, Ambassador Extraordinary in Rome and Ambassador in Paris. Throughout this remarkable and interesting career Lord Dufferin had the support of Lady Harriet, a remarkable personality in her own right, as reflected in her published JOURNALS of life in Canada and elsewhere,

THE DUFFERIN'S INTRODUCTION TO GASPE

On July 8, 1873, the trim steam-yacht, "DRUID", flying the flag of the Governor-General of Canada, rounded Shiphead inbound for Gaspé harbour. From its deck Lord and Lady Dufferin watched the scene unfold as the "DRUID" moved up the Bay past Indian Cove, St. George's Cove, Grand Greve, Little Gaspé and Cape aux Os towards Peninsula and the entrance to the sheltered harbour beyond the great Sandy Beach Bar. For their impressions of this, their first visit to Gaspé, let us turn to Lady Harriet's JOURNAL -



GASPÉ.

Tuesday, July 8th.

A new page in our Canadian history - Gaspé. This morning I came on deck and found that we were steaming up a lovely lough into a splendid harbour. A sunny landscape: hills and white houses and red roofs dotted about; sufficient houses to make it very gay, but not enough to make a town of it. "Such a place for a sailing boat", D. thinks [The JOURNAL abbreviation for the Earl of Dufferin] and is delighted with it.

A gentleman comes on board and we make arrangements for the morrow. We get our mail and write our letters.

In the afternoon a deputation appears and reads an Address, to which His Ex. replies "in suitable terms". The deputation consists of the Mayor, the Custom House Officers, the Doctor and other local dignitaries. [of Gaspé] They ask if we will have a drive and promise to have carriages ready for us when we like. So at four o'clock we go ashore. On the landing-place we are met by our friends, and I find that Gaspé driving is all to be done tête-a-tête. The Mayor takes His Ex. in a gig. I follow with a millowner in the next. Number Three contains the Colonel [Colonel Fletcher, C.M.G., Scots Fusilier Guards, Military Secretary to the Governor-General] and Mr. Eden (of whom more hereafter); Number Four, Lady Harriet [Colonel Fletcher's wife, a daughter of the Earl of Romney and close friend of the Countess of Dufferin] and the Doctor; Fred. [Lieut-Colonel Frederick Rowan Hamilton, late 9th Foot, brother of the Countess of Dufferin and A.D.C. to the Governor-General in Canada and later in India] closes the procession with I don't know who; but he must have been the fifth in order of precedence at Gaspé. It was amusing starting off in this way, and we took a pretty drive for nearly two hours, and made ourselves as agreeable as possible to our several companions. It was rather fun, in the evening, comparing notes as to the various items of news, and the different opinions we had gleaned from our drivers. One considered Gaspé the rising place in the universe, another viewed it gloomily, etc.

Mr. Kidd and Mr. Campbell (belonging to the Governor-General's office) dined with us, and we saw some fireworks and a bonfire in our honour on shore.

Wednesday, July 9th.

A very great day. Up at six, and go ashore; tents and baggage are packed into canoes and go down the Bay, while we drive to meet them. We are in our gigs again; but ours is a double one and we are driven by the Mr. Eden of whom I spoke before. He is the "oldest inhabitant", a Custom House Officer and a most sanguine person. He assures us we shall catch fifty salmon and views everything in the couleur de rosiest light. We do have a most lovely drive. The country is like the Highlands, and we see wild hills on one side and Gaspé Bay on the other. The road is through trees

and it would be impossible anywhere to see a more beautiful country. The day is very fine, we drive very fast, and it is most pleasant. In an hour and a half we meet the canoes on the Dartmouth River, and we become most picturesque ! Imagine six birch-bark canoes in procession; in each two men stand upright, with long poles in their hands, while two passengers sit in the center of the boat. We have three hours journey in this way up a beautiful river, going up rapids and enjoying ourselves. Then we arrive at a salmon pool, get out, and pitch our tents. We have two bell tents, a small one for Fred. and a tent for the cook. The twelve canoe-men make one of birch bark for themselves. We hoist our flag and take possession. Our chef is capital; he works away, builds himself a fireplace, gets out his pots and pans, and soon sets before us a splendid dinner. We have soup and fish, and entrées and pudding, and are far from "roughing it". We have but two trials in life - one is great, the other small - 1st, the terrible flies and 2nd the obstinacy of the salmon, who do not rise. The gentlemen whip the pools and catch nothing, and we ladies find a few trout; then we have tea and retire to our tents. We have a little trouble in them at first. Mosquito-curtains have been put up but as I endeavour to crawl under them the whole erection tumbles down, and it is some time before I am safe inside.

Thursday, July 10th.

We are all up early, and breakfast at five, get into our canoes and proceed higher up the river. The pools we reach today are very lovely, and we have a very pleasant day at them. I catch a number of trout, so do Fred. and Lady Harriet; and Fred. got a salmon - the only one. We stopped fishing at eleven; the men made a bower of branches and birch bark, and we sat and read and ate until four, when we fished again. The last pool was so pretty - or, rather, fine. There were great cliffs on either side, and in front a waterfall with a wall of rock and trees behind it, the further course of the river being quite hidden from view. At eight o'clock we left, and paddled down to our camp, passing through some great rapids. The worst are called the "Lady's Steps". Tea and bed followed.

Friday, July 11th

Again we breakfast at five and begin our return journey in exactly the same way as we came. Finding an invitation from an American gentleman to go up his river, the St. John, and to stay with him, we accept; so we go on board the "DRUID", wash and dress better than is possible in a tent, and in two hours begin a new adventure.

We drive for half an hour, cross a stream in a boat, walk a little way, and then meet six saddle horses. These we mount, and ride for three hours through the forest; five miles of the way being through a burned wood. The tall, charred trunks are all that remain of the old forest but a beautiful fresh underwood has grown up everywhere. This ride brings us to Mr. Curtis' "shanty" on the St. John.

I could not get on with him at first, but I soon found that he was very nice, and that it was only preoccupation that was the matter with him - and no wonder, for it seems that we ought to have brought blankets with us, and the poor man is in despair, as he, of course, has a very limited supply in the backwoods. We swear that we like doing without blankets, and he is happy. There was time for a little fishing, and Fred. caught a salmon. Lady Harriet and I sleep in a tent; D., the Colonel and Fred., side by side in the house. Off their bedroom is a dining-room, covered in with mosquito-curtains, under which we dine.

The sand-flies are dreadful here, but we try to defy them with smoky fires (called "smudges") and curtains. After dinner we sit out of doors before a pile of blazing wood.

Saturday, July 12th.

After breakfast this morning we got into canoes and were four hours going up the river; however, we stopped five times on our way to fish so the time did not appear long. We only caught trout thus far; but we have reached "Kelly's Pool" and are told that here salmon will surely come. D. catches one (18 lbs) almost immediately. Mr. Curtis hooks one for me, and hands me the rod, but in so doing off it comes; then he hooks another, I take the rod again, and enjoy myself immensely while I play the fish. I

landed him, and great was my joy and pride. Colonel Fletcher and Lady Harriet each play one, but she loses hers. Then we are carried swiftly down the rapids home. Dinner - fireside-bed ! Alas ! bed is not the end. There was frost tonight, and the limited supply of blankets was terrible. I woke at one, very cold, got up, and dressed in all my clothes, and lay down again, but not to sleep. I shivered till four and at this early hour on Sunday morning might have been found sitting at a great wood fire out of doors: a tent on the right, where sleeps my friend; behind me a wooden house where sleeps my husband, brother and the Colonel; to the left a section of a tent, jutting out of which may be seen the feet of sleeping men; one - who is awake - attends to my fire; a dog lies by, the river rolls along in the background. In this picture I may be represented reading a novel; the primeval forest extends itself on every side of me. The rest of the world go up to breakfast at seven, and we rode and drove home to our ship again. Mr. Curtis "of Boston" was most kind to us and very pleasant.

Monday, July 14th.

We started in the night, and found ourselves next morning off Percé. The view from our ship is quite lovely. There is the great, precipitous rock standing out by itself, with a natural arch through it, which gives the name to the place; then, on the mainland, the red cliffs rise above the sea, crowned with green shrubs, and the plateau on which the little town is built, slopes down to the water and ends in another great cliff. The sun shines and everything is delightful. Colonel Fletcher and B. both made sketches; when they had finished we steamed round the rock and got into a boat to row ashore.

A salute was fired (by the blacksmith) and all the fishing population of Percé, headed by their Mayor, Manager and the Sheriff, met us and, of course, read an Address.

Percé is a most important fishing station. It is principally owned by Jersey people who have never been to it, and their representative here is Mr. Orange (sic) In addition to its beautiful scenery it has the merit of spotless purity (in spite of the strong smell of fish pervading the atmosphere). The houses and stores are all of

the freshest white, with red window-sashes and doors; the streets are gravel. When His Ex. had replied to the Address we went through the places where the fish is salted, dried, etc.

The operation is as follows: On a table on the beach the cod is beheaded, cut open, and spread flat. He is then brought into a large, square room, laid upon the floor, and salted; above him, below him and around him are his fellow cods. After remaining in this retreat for three or four days, he is put into a great tub and washed. From this he gets into a barrow, and is wheeled out of doors to a long bed of dried fir boughs, upon which he reposes with his neighbours and gets dried. He ought to lie **there** for six days and the Percé fishermen have to watch the clouds all that time and rush to lift him into a shed should it threaten to rain. A shower would spoil him. From this free-and-easy stage he is removed and stacked on the gravel and covered with birch bark and heavy stones; this is his final trial and he is now fit to fulfil the object of his existence, and to be eaten.

The stacks are really works of art - they are so neat and trim. We also inspected the stores and shops of the town. We were told there was a splendid view from the top of a mountain or high cliff above the town and we started to drive there. I only got to the bottom of the worst climb, but the gentlemen went to the top. I rode in a gig with the Mayor and Mayoress.

In the afternoon we continued our journey up the Bay of Chaleur to Paspédiac (sic) off which little town we anchored at ten o'clock.

TO BE CONTINUED.

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

LADY DUFFERIN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF VISITS TO GASPE

PART II

The first part of this narrative, recalling the first visit of the Earl and Countess of Dufferin to Gaspé in July, 1873, concluded with the arrival of the Vice-Regal yacht, "DRUID", at Paspébiac from Percé. Apparently the visit of the Governor-General to the Paspébiac fishing station was unexpected for when His Excellency went ashore, early in the morning, he found that no arrangements had been made to welcome him. Consequently, he returned to the "DRUID" which then set its course up Bay Chaleur for the port of Dalhousie, N.B. There a welcome was accorded and Lord and Lady Dufferin were entertained by Senator Hamilton and others.

June of the following year, 1874, found the Governor-General's party back in Gaspé. This second part of the narrative takes up the account of that visit, as recorded by Lady Harriet's JOURNAL, beginning on Friday, June 12th., 1874.

Ken Annett

LADY DUFFERIN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF VISITS TO GASPE

PART II

Friday, June 12th

Found ourselves in sight of Gaspé this morning. Not a ripple on the water, and the place looking lovely. Mr. Eden, the vivacious harbour-master, came on board, presented me with a large Indian box which had been made for me, told us all about the salmon, etc.

D. [the Governor-General] went into the bush to see about our fishing-box. We have brought with us the pieces of a little bedroom and dressing-room which are to be put together on the site, which D. walked eighteen miles to select.

The night was very bad - rain, snow, and hail. We are glad to be in harbour.

Sunday, June 14th

Rather a fine looking morning, but cold. We went to church [likely St. Paul's Anglican Church, Gaspé Basin] and had a good sermon - short and plain. In the afternoon we landed on the York side of the harbour, and drove along a good road.

We met a friend on the way, a farmer, originally from Cavan, who has cleared, and now lives upon, thirty acres of his own land. He and his wife have added fifteen to the population of Gaspé. He asked us up to his house, which was very comfortable: a large sitting room, with three concertinas, books, etc., in it; a dining room, kitchen and nice bedroom on the ground floor, and everything very neat and clean. The view from his door - lovely.

[It would be most interesting to know the name of this family on the York side of Gaspé Basin who thus welcomed and entertained the Governor-General and his Lady.]

Monday, June 15th

Our two rooms were taken off in the middle of the night to their destination on the St. John River, and D., Archie [a son of Lord and Lady Dufferin], and I soon went after them. We made the first part of the journey in a "wagon", then got on horses and rode at a jog-walk for three hours, when we reached our fishing-box. We gave all necessary directions there, and then mounted again to cross to the York River. When we reached Mr. Reynold's camp, which

is situated on this rushing river, I got Archie some food, and then the poor, little man had to start back again, and only reached home at ten at night. He was very proud of his long day, which prevented him acknowledging any fatigue.

Our host is so pleasant and kind, and we had a very agreeable dinner. Colonel McNeill [Major-General Sir John McNeill, V.C., K.C.B., Equerry to Her Majesty the Queen Victoria], and Mr. Monck are also here. [Member of the family of Lord Monck, previous Governor-General of Canada] Afterwards we sat around a fire outside, and then came in to write up the game-book.

Tuesday, June 16th.

It rained early in the morning, but was sunny, though cold, during the day. I fished for a short time, and caught, or, rather, hooked a "kelt" - an uneatable salmon, which has been in the river all the winter. D. caught one salmon of 14 lbs., Colonel McNeill, two, and Mr. Monck, two; but it was considered a very bad day's sport.

This is a beautiful river; numbers of pools, a very rapid current, very clear water. The woods have a great deal of birch in them, and the look-out is much more open than on most of the rivers.

On our return we had dinner, camp-fire, etc., as before. I have such a comfortable room, with carpet and curtains.

Wednesday, June 17th.

D. fished vigorously all this very wet day with no result. The only fortunate person was Mr. Monck, who brought home two salmon, 26 and 27 lbs. The others caught kelt and were very angry over these "unclean" fish.

Thursday, June 18th.

We telegraphed last week to Fred. and Dr. Campbell [Montreal Minister and a great sportsman] not to come, as there seems no chance of fishing on the St. John beginning yet; but today we hear that they have arrived. Colonel McNeill and Mr. Monck have most kindly gone up the river to a distant house in order to leave room for them here, as Mr. Reynold's insists upon having them. Today is terribly wet.

Saturday, June 20th.

Fred. and Dr. Campbell arrived here very early, having left the "DRUID" at 5 A.M. [The "DRUID" lay in Gaspé Basin]

We had a very beautiful day as to weather, but the river had risen so much that there was no fishing. D. and I took a walk, and Fred. upset a canoe and sent himself and two men into the water.

Mr. Monck came down from his house with two salmon, one 29 and the other 22 lbs.

Sunday, June 21st

At last we have a fine day, though it cannot be considered a "midsummer's day". We took a walk, and sat round a "smudge" - that is a fire of damp wood, which smokes and keeps the black-flies and mosquitos off.

Monday, June 22nd.

Nice weather, but the salmon not rising. The river is much too high and the current too rapid. I went down to the pool where D. was fishing in the canoe, and walked back by myself; but I am advised not to do so again, lest I should meet a bear.

Tuesday, June 23rd.

Here are the statistics of our fishing, so far, at York River:

Mr. Reynolds, five fish, weighing 23, 21, 33, 28, 12 lbs.

Colonel McNeill, twelve, weighing 24, 22, 11, 18, 24, 25, 27, 25,
24, 20, 26, 14 lbs.

Mr. Monck, seven weighing 25, 11, 26, 27, 27, 23, 15 lbs

Lord D., three weighing 14, 13, 10 lbs

Fred. two, weighing 22, 14 lbs

So far we have not been fortunate. Last year Mr. Reynolds caught ten fish the first day he went out. Their respective weights were: 47, 37, 30, 12, 19, 20, 18, 30, 30, 10 - the average being 25 lbs. This is narvelous in the way of fishing, and I record it as an interesting fact.

Thursday, June 25th.

Archie arrived today, and Mr. Reynolds left. D. had at last a good day's fishing and came home with six salmon: 26, 25, 14, 13, 12, 10 lbs. Dr. Campbell caught one, 23 lbs, and Fred. nothing. The

day was extremely cold and we were surprised that the fish rose at all.

Our mail arrived, and in the middle of his salmon catching D. sent off dispatches.

Friday, June 26th.

Fred. was given the best pool today and D. went up to the "Little Salmon Hole" and the "Flat Rock" pool. I walked there with him, a distance of about three miles through the woods, and Archie went up the rapids in a canoe. He and I then looked on at the sport, he amusing himself between times by cutting down trees with a hatchet and by feeding a fire with wood.

D.'s first fish was a very lively little one, which jumped and frisked about, and finally took him right down the rapids. It was 12 lbs. The second sulked, and merely kept a good, steady pull on the line, keeping it up for an hour, and only making for the rapids at the last moment. It weighed 23 lbs.

Our lunch, which the men provided, consisted of lumbermen's fare: bread fried in pork fat and tea. We all came down in a canoe, the stream bringing us at a great pace.

We found that Dr. Campbell had not even seen a fish. Fred. caught two, and having just finished a struggle with a 26 pounder, he came home to dinner in very good spirits. This fish was already gaffed and in the boat, when it jumped out again, broke the top of his rod, and had to be played for another five minutes; so that it was a miracle he saved it.

Saturday, June 27th.

We leave today to go to the St. John, so we had all our packing to do. Besides our clothes, there are two tents to be put up, and a sledge to be transported over the river for carrying our goods through the bush. D. and Fred. started to walk, and a few minutes after they left we saw a raft coming down the stream, with a little dog upon it, and a green tree floating over his head. Then a canoe came in sight with Colonel McNeill and Mr. Monck in it, and we found that the raft contained the salmon they had caught, which they sent off with the dog as its only live passenger to astonish us. They brought home nineteen large salmon, the average

5.

being 23 lbs weight. Mr. Monck had caught eight one day and five one evening.

We were soon after this ready for our start. Archie, Dr. Campbell, and I rode - I with a jar of cream on my knee. Our road was very bad, trees lying across it and much mud and marsh to go through.

D. met us just outside our camp and we were all delighted with our new habitation when we reached it. The men had worked very hard, and had made cedar bark paths and fir plantations round the houses. The "village", over which the Dominion flag floats, consists of two large tents for the men, and of a wooden house divided into two rooms. The windows have green mosquito-blinds over them, and the bed, white mosquito-curtains. There is a washing table, and lots of pegs and shelves, and a little bit of carpet, which is a great luxury in the woods. A cedar path leads to the log house, in which there is the sitting-room, and two little "cabins" in which our guests sleep.

Opposite our door a bonfire burns, and when the flies are bad, we have a row of smudges to smoke them away.

The kitchen is in another log house, on the other side, and from it we soon had an excellent dinner.

Nowell (D.'s valet) has made all these arrangements, and, in spite of many bites from the untiring flies, he works away with good humor and skill.

Monday, June 29th.

The first fishing on our own river ! The fishermen drew lots for the pools, and Archie and I went to see D.'s success. He only brought two home when we returned to dine at two o'clock. The others had not seen a fish, so D. and Dr. Campbell resolved to go down towards the mouth of the river, the fish being only now on their way up. There is a little house there in which they intend to sleep tonight.

Archie went to fish in a lake close by, and brought home fourteen trout. Some of these we ate for tea.

Wednesday, July 1st

Another very bad day, but, as it was Dominion Day, we had several flags flying and a great bonfire in the camp. D. and Dr. Campbell returned. They seem to have enjoyed their trip in spite of the weather, and if it had been good they would have had splendid

fishing: as it was, they had fished till two o'clock in the day and the former caught three salmon and Dr. Campbell five.

Thursday, July 2nd.

D. was up to a nameless pool, and caught five salmon before two o'clock. He was coming home when he caught the last, so he determined to bring it down to the house. I was hungrily watching for the fishermen's return to dinner, when I saw the canoe arriving with D. hanging on to a salmon. This was very exciting and we saw the creature brought ashore without a gaff.

D. wanted me to fish in the afternoon, so about five o'clock we went again to the nameless pool. I stood up in the canoe, a man at each end keeping it steady with poles, and began to throw my fly. The fish did not come so we changed the bait, and tried "Jock Scot" and "King Coffee". This royal personage was large and gaudy, and had, alas! a very big hook. "A rise!", "He's on!" Then I stand firm and my friend jumps several times up in the air; but I hold him well in hand, and suddenly he spits out my fly and is gone! Again we go up and down the pool with "King Coffee", and then we try the "Silver Doctor" and at seven o'clock another fish is on! This one simply tugs; he keeps a steady pull on all the time, and I do the same by him, and take care to give him no rest, but wind him up every time he attempts to be quiet; once he jumps, and they say he is a large one. This game goes on for some time and then my friend thinks he will take me down the rapids. I am still standing in the canoe but keeping firm by pressing my knees against the bar across it. We went down half-a-mile, hand-in-hand like this, and I began to feel that it was a question which of us would be exhausted first. A salmon-rod with a fish at the end of it is no joke! I began "to wish he were dead" and to say to myself that I would never go through such an anxiety again, for the fish is never safe till he is in the boat. At last we gaffed him, brought him safely to his death, weighed him, and found him 26 lbs - the largest caught here this year; so I am very proud of my success. The nameless pool is now the "Countess Pool".

Saturday, July 4th.

A wet morning again. We packed up and went down in canoes towards the "DRUID", fishing on the way. The salmon would not rise and we had only three to show at the end of a long day.

We left our boats in the evening, and drove to Gaspé, where we got on board the "DRUID", after saying farewell to our fishermen.

We meant to start at once, but there was a fog outside, and we did not get off till four in the morning. (bound for Tadousac)

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

LADY DUFFERIN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF VISITS TO GASPE

PART III

For family reasons and their extended visit home to the British Isles in the summer of 1875, the Earl and Countess of Dufferin were unable to return to Gaspé that year. In February their seventh child, a son, Frederick, was born - the second of the family to be born in Canada - their daughter, Victoria, having been born here in 1873. In May the Governor-General and his family sailed for Britain and returned to Canada in the autumn. At the end of the year Colonel and Lady Harriet Fletcher, companions of the Dufferins on visits to Gaspé, returned home to England. The new Military Secretary, Colonel Littleton, C.M.G., late Grenadier Guards, and his wife arrived to replace the Fletchers.

Gaspé, however, had not been forgotten and with the Spring of 1876 the Vice-Regal couple made plans to return. Once again the "DRUID" brought the Dufferin party to familiar haven in the beautiful Basin of Gaspé. For an account of that visit we turn again to Lady Harriet's JOURNAL from June 30th., 1876.

KEN ANNETT

LADY DUFFERIN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF VISITS TO GASPE

Friday, June 30th.

Arrived at Gaspé at eight o'clock [from Québec on "DRUID"] most fortunate in having had so good a passage. Bad news of our river; they say it is much too high for fishing. We went up to it however - an hour's drive and three hours on horseback - Archie being the only one who really enjoyed this. Our huts look very nice, and after lunch we went out to try the river; but the news was too true - the water was much too "heavy". We returned home to dinner - and mosquitos. Let me say at once that these torments are ever present and quite intolerable.

Saturday, July 1st.

Having no hope of salmon here, D. and Fred. went off to the York River, where they had been invited to fish, and which is an earlier river than ours. [The St. John] I sat all day in mosquito-armor, reading, Archie took charge of smudges and occupied himself in various small devices for killing time, and at eight o'clock D. and Fred. returned. D. had caught five salmon and a grilse, the average weight of the salmon being 24 lbs., the largest one 28 lbs. Fred. had one salmon of 26 lbs. and a large trout of 5 lbs. His salmon had been foul-hooked, and took him two hours to kill.

Monday, July 3rd.

As it has rained again, and there can not be any fishing here for some days, we resolved to return to our comfortable and mosquito-less "DRUID". Archie and I came off in the morning, and in spite of the long ride I am quite glad to be away from those torments. D. and Fred. went to the York. D. this time got one and Fred. five. The largest of his was 32 lbs and all were over 23 lbs. It was quite late when we assembled on board again, and we had not finished dinner till nearly ten.

Tuesday, July 4th.

The greater part of the fish yesterday had been caught at a pool called "Miller's Landing", and as D. found we could drive there quite easily, he suggested that I should try my luck. We started directly after breakfast, and three hours driving and walking brought us to our pool. We immediately set to work, but not a rise was to be got, and I feared my expedition was going to be fruitless.

We gave up this "good" place, and went lower down the river, and very soon had the pleasure of a rise. I stood up in the canoe to throw the fly, and sat down to manage my rod when the fish was on, for it would be no joke to upset the boat in these swift rivers. I landed my victim with success, and he weighed 21 lbs. I tried once more, and caught another 24 lbs. D. and I then had lunch, and I returned home at four, while he fished on, and brought two more salmon home in the evening. Fred. was fishing higher up the river, and we hoped he would have a good day; but he had not a rise till five o'clock, when he came down to the place where he had been in the morning ["Miller's Landing"] and immediately had three. He got the third on, and was just happy, thinking it secure, when his reel broke, his fish went, and he had to come home.

We had a very jolly little dinner when we met again, and enjoy being comfortable on board after our experiences of the "Bush".

The owner of this river [York], with his party, caught fifty-seven salmon, averaging 23 lbs. the first week he was up here; but, hoping for more, he went a long way higher up to camp at the "Narrows" and we have just heard that after four days there they have only caught three salmon. Mr. Reynolds will regret this expedition when he sees what good fishing we have had close to his house.

Wednesday, July 5th.

This was a lovely day, and we were assured that two or three days of this will set our river right. We went ashore "to shop" and D. visited two schools, and after lunch we fished for "Tommy cods." We all sat in a boat and fished over the side. The excitement was in the variety of the game - sea-toads, blue-fish, flat-fish, Tommy cods, smelts. We brought home a bucketful.

Sunday, July 9th.

We went to church in the morning and in the afternoon took a most lovely walk. The weather was beautiful.

Monday, July 10th

This morning Fred. and Archie started for the Bush, and D. and I went to fish the lower pools, intending to sleep here, and to follow

them tomorrow. D. went on foot, taking with him a little boy to act as guide. On the way, this boy told him that his father had been drowned two months ago, about twenty miles up the river, having slipped into a rapid as he was pushing some felled wood into the stream, and that his body had never been found. Today, when fishing from a canoe, D. hooked a salmon, and the man had actually gaffed it, when it wriggled over the stern of the canoe back into the water. Knowing that the salmon was a dead fish, D. paddled slowly over the pools below. All of a sudden, as he was looking over the side of the canoe, he saw lying at the bottom of one of them, the body of the poor man. It was in the same condition as on the day of his death, having been preserved in the ice-cold water.

I had a canoe and two men to myself, and began the day well by getting several rises and three salmon. I thought I was going to do wonders; but salmon-fishers are never sure of an hour's "luck". D. came down from his pool to meet me, with four fish, and we landed, and were devoured by mosquitos during lunch. I began again, and whipped the waters, without even a rise till 6:30. On my way home I tried a new pool and got fast to a salmon, which gave me very hard work and the greatest anxiety for half an hour, for we were on the brink of a very troublesome rapid, and I wanted to keep him away from that. Then, some parts of the pool were very deep and in others there were logs and traps of all descriptions; so that I never felt sure of my fish till he was landed in the boat. The salmon on our river are smaller than those on the York but they are strong and lively. This one kept rushing off with the line, and jumping up in the air so far from me that I could scarcely believe he was my salmon. D. had eight salmon, and I four - a great day's fishing.

Wednesday, July 12th.

D. did not go out this morning and sent our Captain [of the "DRUID"] in his stead, a nice, old man who has never caught a salmon in his life. He returned at two o'clock highly delighted with a twenty pounder he had landed, and which we went off to his wife's

Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Middleton, who left their river today, came on board and had lunch before embarking for Québec. Mr. Reynolds gave us his score, which I copy, for the sake of those it may concern:-

Salmon Fishing on the York River, 1876

	<u>No. Salmon</u>	<u>Average Weight</u>
His Excellency	8	24
Lady Dufferin	2	22
Capt. Hamilton	6	24
Mr. Molson	14	23
Mr. Middleton	50	21
Mr. Reynolds	29	21
Mr. Grant	1	27

TOTAL	110	22

Saturday, July 15th

I went up the river with D. and Fred. to catch trout. D. was very anxious to make up his forty salmon but he was able only to capture a grilse.

When we returned to the ship we dined, said good-bye to all the men, and started for Tadousac.

VISIT OF 1877

The "DRUID", with the Governor-General's party on board returned to Gaspé Basin on June 23rd., 1877. On this occasion Lady Harriet brought one of her daughters, Nellie, with her. On arrival at Gaspé they found Mr. Reynolds and his York River party were preparing to leave as the fishing had proved to be disappointing. The only lucky fisherman had been Colonel McNeill, who had got thirty-three salmon on the York before moving on to fish the Matapedia.

On June 27th., Lady Harriet and Nellie joined Lord Dufferin and Captain Fred. Hamilton at their camp on the St. John River. The fishing there proved to be poor so they remained only a week. Despite the lack of salmon, Lady Harriet seems to have enjoyed this 1877 visit, noting in her JOURNAL:-

Wednesday, July 4th.

All busy packing. D. stayed at home, and I went out for an hour

5.

and caught ten trout - one three and a half lbs. I fish with a beautiful little bamboo rod which, with its reel, only weighs six ounces.

It was a lovely day. I was quite sorry to leave our camp, as I enjoyed it very much this year, and we were less troubled with flies than usual.

We had the Captain to dine with us and started immediately after dinner. [bound for Tadousac]

LAST VISITS -1878

With the end of their stay in Canada fast approaching, Lady Harriet's JOURNAL reflects a poignancy in its references to last visits to Gaspesia. On June 8th., they had seen several of their children off to England from the port of Québec and the JOURNAL notes:-

Saturday, June 8th.

D. and I, Mr.Reynolds and Mrs.Middleton, went on board the "DRUID" and are now on our way to Gaspé; but we shall not be ourselves till we have slept upon all the partings of the last two days. It has been so delightful in Canada, and never again, I fear, can we hope to be surrounded by so many true and kind friends.

Tuesday, June 11th.

Everything we do now seems to be impressed with that horrid word "last"; here we are at Gaspé for the "last" time, enjoying our "last" fishing, cruising for the "last" time in the old "DRUID" and mentally saying "good-bye" to many a pleasant thing which has become a habit to us during the past six years.

We arrived early in the morning, and even before breakfast there was evident excitement on deck, and I could hear through my skylight as I dressed "yarns" of the forty-pounder the Colonel had lost, and of the smaller fry he and Sir Frederick Graham have killed. I elected to remain at home today but Mrs.Littleton went with Mr. Reynolds to stay a few days with him, and to join her husband on the York.

Most unfortunately, the Dufferin's hopes for a last, peaceful visit in Gaspé were to be dashed by events back in Québec City. Of these the JOURNAL states:

Wednesday, June 12th

...some very important telegrams came. I had a cipher one to do which took me two hours and a half. There is a riot at Québec; the soldiers out, the ringleader shot, and many people wounded.

Thursday, June 13th

...D. got a telegram from Québec asking him to have a British regiment sent there, so he thinks he had better return at once. The fires are lighted, coal taken on board, and by two o'clock in the night we are off. Great will be the disappointment to the men we employ here when they come in the morning and find us gone. Before starting, we sent off numbers of telegrams and the clerk of the office said his "head felt very bad". He seldom has so much work to do in quiet Gaspé.

Public engagements, including a visit to Boston, ruled out a return of the Governor-General and his Lady to Gaspé. However, in July, they accepted an invitation from Mrs. Stephen to fish the Matapedia River from her camp at Causapschal. It is of interest to note that in her JOURNAL Lady Harriet states that on that occasion they fished with John Beshavi (sic), a Gaspé fisherman. This reference likely should read, John Bechervaise.

OUTWARD BOUND

At the end of August, 1878, Lady Dufferin received letters from England which obliged her to return home at once. One of her last acts was to go down to the "DRUID" with Lord Dufferin to say good-bye to the crewmen and to present the Captain with a telescope. She sailed from Québec for England on August 31st. The Governor-General remained in Canada until October 19. One of his last public acts was to lay the foundation-stone of the DUFFERIN TERRACE overlooking the majestic St. Lawrence - the sea way to Gaspé and far beyond.