

(pp. 36-37) It is for this reason that the secrets are maintained. But the more radical group in the abbey wants to open the library to the potentates of the cities who will buy its knowledge to promote their civic prestige. The radicals will use information and knowledge as a commodity. How like our own times when both government and business are coming increasingly to support the view that information is a marketable commodity. Is this really a solution or just the basis of another difficult problem? As Anita R. Schiller has pointed out, "we are coming dangerously close to the point where not only information, but research as well, is increasingly regarded as a commodity, whose proprietary economic value to the private sector transcends all other values, interests and uses it has in society. In this evolving environment, how long will it be before the suppression of ideas, for proprietary reasons, begins to be seen as necessary and reasonable?" (*Library Issues*, 4, no. 2 (November 1983)) A grim picture, but one that must be confronted by archivists and librarians alike if the traditional precepts of their professions are not to be overridden by the information merchants of our age.

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Canada Home: Juliana Horatia Ewing's Fredericton Letters, 1867-1869. MARGARET HOWARD BLOM and THOMAS E. BLOM, eds., Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. 455 p. illus. ISBN 0-7748-0174-3 \$24.95.

The appearance of these letters is a major event in Maritime documentary publishing. Mrs. Ewing was a children's writer of distinction, wit, and grace in a milieu awash with maudlin sentimentality. Her letters, often long and discursive, are filled with sharply observed local detail. Between 1867 and 1869, there was a steady flow of them to "Dearest Mum" and sisters in Yorkshire, England; they are letters filled with a sense of joy and wonder at the natural environment of the provincial capital, and were no doubt stimulated by an obviously happy marriage.

Mrs. Ewing (I cannot bring myself to call her by her Christian name, which would seem to presume!) was, like the Bronte sisters, a daughter of the parsonage. She grew up in Ecclesfield in the West Riding of Yorkshire where her father, Alfred Gatty, held the living of St. Mary's for sixty-three years. In the words of the editors, the Gattys made "an amazing family even for Victorian times." The sheer intellectual industry, output, informed acquisition, and relentless curiosity which characterised so many of the well-educated middle class were epitomised in the Gattys. By the time of her marriage to Alexander Ewing, a captain in the military commissariat, and her arrival in Fredericton shortly thereafter, Mrs. Ewing was a nationally recognised successful author whose fame was to outlast her short life. As late as 1930, I was reading her *Jackanapes* with pleasure; it is *not* another *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

The Ewings reached Fredericton on 28 June 1867, the week of Confederation. The letters over the next two years record the daily round of an army officer's wife, with its formalities and diversions, punctuated by expatriate problems and pleasant surprises, and perceived by a discerning eye. Mrs. Ewing never plods with pedestrian thoroughness; she seems to skip through her letters leaving a trail of vignettes and impressions like a shower of sparks. A glance at the excellent index reveals those subjects she gave most attention: apparel, botany, British Army, climate, church, pet bulldog Hector, Mrs. Ewing's writings and new manuscripts, gardening, the Gatty family, housekeeping, mails, Bishop Medley and his wife, sketching and social activities. I found I had to keep reminding myself that these writings are not from a diary or engagement book. We are constantly immersed in busy-ness and happenings, enriched by deft comment but not much prolonged reflection. Daily life on the fringe of the Fredericton establishment was consumed with practicalities which would interest Mrs. Ewing's mother, Margaret Gatty, given her predilection *inter alia* for ecclesiastical affairs, botany, and material suitable for a children's magazine; most mothers enjoy vicariously the domestic minutiae of their children's lives. These letters were first received at intervals of ten days to two weeks; to read too many at once is to risk indigestion. We should perhaps respect the time scale of these very condensed offerings to appreciate them fully.

What was the state of the mails to England from the Maritimes during the late 1860s? The editors have provided a very helpful account of the service provided by Samuel Cunard and his competitors which shows that letters could be expected to arrive nine or ten days after dispatch — faster even than “surface mail” today. A steady flow of letters could be maintained by directing them via Boston and Halifax alternately. Certainly the postal service gave the Ewings little complaint, although Mrs. Ewing had difficulty in Fredericton obtaining the book rate for her literary manuscripts. The following is her account of the proceedings:

I strove to send my little MS. last mail by Book Post in vain. You should have seen the man handle it, & poke at it as if he smelt treason — then he gave me a soulpiercing glance of J.P. severity & astutely observed — ‘There’s *writing!*’ ‘Certainly —’ I said, in an equally knowing & decisive manner — ‘It’s manuscript — BOOK POST!’ But after due consultation with his fat principal, that gentleman from a distant post of authority shouted with the determination of a policeman in a pantomime — ‘No! no! we can’t have it! Charge it full — charge it full’ — or words to that effect. The affairs of this public office seem to be conducted as Roman Catholics hope we may be saved — by ‘invincible ignorance’!! The fat gentleman certainly would never have seen the Emperor’s new clothes — for anyone less fit for his situation it is difficult to imagine. (pp. 23-24)

This could be a speech from a play. The Victorian middle class were ubiquitously theatrical in both their lighter and their melodramatic moments. We have a sense of the Ewings embracing life in Canada in the guise of a continuous “soap” with marvellous changes of scenes, costume, and props as furs, toboggans (for

“coasting”), and snowshoes gave way to canoes and picnics. However, a two-year stay could not reveal the more fundamental rhythms of Canadian life which lay beneath the colonial amenities.

For anyone who has lived in Fredericton there is much with which to identify, in particular the weather; but we are no longer, for instance, constantly exposed to the danger of fire: “The coolness with which people regard being ‘burnt out’ here is amazing.” Of one man it was said, “the fire haunts him everywhere . . . fire follows him.” (p. 42) Mrs. Ewing made thrifty purchases at “burnt out” sales (as did the wife of this reviewer in a more euphemistic Fredericton “smoke sale” a century later).

In contrast to the sharp decline in documentary publishing by archival repositories, free-lance publication of correspondence and diaries (including facsimiles) is on the increase. *Canada Home* excels at this with exhaustive scholarship supported by a clean, elegant layout. The problem of transposing letters written at speed into print, involving decisions about abbreviations, punctuation, and illegibility, has been faced squarely to produce sensible solutions and compromises. (Is not the illegible word on page 89 likely to be “britches”?) Illustrations within the letters have been supplemented by others which were pasted into albums. Photos from other sources are also used effectively. Questions of interest remain, however. When were these letters received by the Sheffield Central Library? Did they remain long unregarded? One hundred and one letters have been published — how many others are there from Canada? It would be nice to know.

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The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell, Vol. 1: Cambridge Essays, 1888-99.
KENNETH BLACKWELL et al, eds. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983.
xxxiv, 554 p. ISBN 0-04-9200674.

The nucleus of the Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University was acquired from Russell himself in 1968; much further material has since been added. An edition of his *Collected Papers* was planned as early as 1969, although some items now published (not all of which are at McMaster) were not found until several years later. Usually an undertaking entitled “collected papers” consists very largely or entirely of writings already published. But in this first volume of Russell’s papers, unpublished material predominates. It might be thought, for example, that student essays and papers read primarily to student societies would scarcely merit inclusion. But the editors’ aim has been “to bring together all the shorter writings that record Russell’s own thoughts, whether or not they have been previously published.” This has been done in the belief that all such writings need to be taken into account and added to his published books for a full understanding of his views.