happy that he cannot come again among them. – Some think that the Governor appointed him to the office to get rid of him ... [5 October 1829. Public Archives of Nova Scotia, MG 1 vol. 980 reel 2]

It remains the task of the critic to explain the discrepancy between this portrait of Haliburton, Canada’s first international best-selling author, and the serious portrait which emerges from the letters.

Ruth Panofsky
(Ruth Panofsky is a graduate student in Canadian literature at York University where she is working on a bibliographical study of Thomas Chandler Haliburton’s The Clockmaker series.)


We have been waiting for this book for a long time. Although Roughing It in the Bush is one of the most important texts written from nineteenth-century Canada, the complications of trans-Atlantic publication and editorial intervention have until now impeded its appearance as it was originally conceived in 1852. The versions upon which Moodie has been judged [often harshly] by her modern critics have derived from the revised 1871 edition, which omitted most of Moodie’s poems and the contributions of other members of her family: her husband’s poems and chapters – ‘The Village Hotel,’ ‘The Land-Jobber’ and ‘Canadian Sketches’ – which supply the family and historical background to Susanna’s more impressionistic material, and her brother’s poetic and prose accounts of a ‘whirlwind.’ It is clear, from the text now reconstructed by Ballstadt, that Moodie did not initially perceive her book as a linear autobiographical narrative but as a sketchbook reflecting a communal experience; she used her formally structured poems to frame the more fragmentary prose selections that recount her psychologically shattering emigration, and balanced her own work with the writings of several other members of her family community.

In the absence of a manuscript, this CEECT edition represents the editor’s best effort to reproduce Moodie’s intended text as inferred from her own comments, from his familiarity with her style, and from corrections made to sheets within the two impressions issued by Richard Bentley in London in 1852. Ballstadt’s most significant change to the contents of the second impression is the addition of ‘Jeanie Burns,’ a chapter that failed to reach Bentley in time and was subsequently added to Life in the Clearings (1853). As Ballstadt has helpfully included as appendices two documents that situate Roughing It contextually – the publisher’s advertisement for the first edition and Moodie’s introduction to the 1871 edition – he might also have appended ‘Michael McBride,’ the chapter that Moodie withdrew after its appearance in Montreal in the Literary Garland had prompted the local Catholic press to accuse her of anti-Catholicism.
Cultural historians will be grateful for the information on Moodie's early life and the production of this text contained in Ballstadt's detailed introduction (drawing on several decades of extensive research on Moodie and her family), as well as for the ample notes that not only cite surviving records of the Moodies' movements and experiences, but also, by identifying places and people named or alluded to, reveal the extent to which Moodie's character sketches and anecdotes are based upon real people and documented events. With this text, one can follow various versions of certain portions of Roughing It, from original accounts in letters and newspapers, to Moodie's use of the material in her Literary Garland sketches, to her final refinement of her work for British readers.

This book has the polished appearance and impressive bibliographical apparatus now expected of CEECT editions. Its large, hospitable type and ample margins are complemented by lists of textual variants and emendations, tabulations of line-end hyphenations in both the copy-text and the current edition, an historical collation of authoritative editions, and a chronological listing of published versions of the text that documents its phases of popularity in England and the United States as well as Canada. Particularly interesting are the maps which specify the land holdings of the Moodies and their neighbours, first in Hamilton township (where the Moodies lived in 1832-33) and then in Douro and Dummer (their home until their 1840 move to Belleville). It is therefore a shame that no editor remembered that the components of Roughing It are distinguished by colourful titles, and thought to include either a table of contents or running titles that locate specific poems and chapters. This book will likely remain in use for a long time, and I hope that this oversight will be corrected in future printings. In the meantime, to avoid the frustration of scanning several hundred pages for 'The Charivari' or 'The Little Stumpy Man,' the reader must compose her own list of titles and page numbers.

My choice of a feminine pronoun in the above sentence signals the feminist nature of my next comment. In the Introduction, why is the author of this book almost always identified as 'Susanna'? This first-name familiarity may have been intended to indicate affection but it connotes diminution and discredit. The reduced names of her agent, John Bruce, and publisher, Richard Bentley, are not John and Richard but Bruce and Bentley. A quick check through earlier CEECT publications reveals that Catharine Parr Traill (Canadian Crusoes) also usually appears as 'Catharine.' However, Frances Brooke (The History of Emily Montague) is never simply 'Frances,' and it goes without saying that the editors of John Richardson (Wacousta) and James De Mille (A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder) did not write about Jack and Jim. Mrs. Moodie would not have been amused.

Mary Jane Edwards has described the vast quantity of intellectual energy fuelling the CEECT, as well as their effort to reach a broad readership by issuing inexpensive paperbound editions. After testing this one as a course book, I would like to recommend that they add to their usual apparatus a checklist of other publications by the author. And having been unable to use Canadian Crusoes for the same course because it was out of stock, I convey my regret at the inefficiency (temporary, I hope) of the production side of this enterprise.

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1 Mary Jane Edwards, 'CEECT: Progress, Procedures, and Problems,' Papers of the

A more accurate subtitle for this work would have been *The Writing of Canadian Fiction in English during the Nineteenth Century*. The opening quotation by John Metcalf states in part that 'Literature is a relationship between writers and readers.' From this, it would be quite natural to assume that equal treatment has been assigned to both writers and readers; but this is not the case. The book is principally concerned with the writing of Canadian fiction, and only superficially with reading. When readership is acknowledged it is linked with Canadian fiction. Immediately excluded, therefore, is the large mass of non-Canadian reading matter more generally digested by Canadians throughout the nineteenth century. Bearing this in mind, a search for the typical reader of Canadian fiction was undertaken, but an individual who ought to have featured prominently in this account remained, in the end, elusive.

The real subject of this book is the 'cultural elite' dedicated to forming 'the writing and reading habits of their compatriots,' a phenomenon explored largely through a variety of literary publications of the period. The opinions and tastes of the constituent members naturally play a significant role in the discussion, but their views are not counterbalanced by those of the mass of Canadian readers, as they should have been. Professor Gerson believes that access to this information is difficult, for the views and predilections of average Canadians were largely unexpressed. Therefore, they 'must be inferred from their leaders' comments and frequent diatribes' aimed at the mass of sensational literature that emanated from the United States. First, this seems to suggest that only sensational matter was read by the majority; secondly, it implies that we can only guess at the reading tastes of the mass of people. Neither assumption is true.

Noting that by the end of the century most adult Canadians could read and had access to book collections, Professor Gerson is curious about the degree of Canadian content, and wonders if there is a possible correlation between Canadian books reviewed and their subsequent readership. The author does recognize the basic flaw in the methodology – the reviews were selective and not, therefore, fully representative of actual output – but concludes that 'the products of Canadian writers and publishers did not, as a group, have a major impact upon Canadian readers.' This conclusion is correct, of course, and not at all surprising; but it is possible to support it in a more substantive fashion.

Questions of readership may be answered with much more confidence by resort-