

# *Wickets in the West: Cricket, Culture, and Constructed Images of Nineteenth-Century Canada*

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*Merely by reading a book, you are plunged into the primeval depths of an ancient forest. Within this dark and untamed place you feel yourself surrounded by terrifying beasts both unheard and unseen. You are suddenly shaken from your fear by the faint sound of a song echoing through the pillar-like trees of the forest. Pulled by the rhythm of the tune, you emerge from the forest to stand on the banks of a nearby river and are completely absorbed by the picturesque image set before you. You see a large birch-bark canoe filled with stout powerful men, seamlessly paddling through the fast-moving river. By their evocative boat song and bright pointed caps you recognize these men as the vaunted fur-trading voyageurs! Listen to how proudly they sing—advancing in their canoe though the heart of the savage Canadian wilderness! With your mind filled with images of far-off Canada, you turn from the book and glance through your drawing-room window to the low-rolling hills of the English countryside. Reflecting on the literary image of the noble voyageurs, juxtaposed against the sheer untamed power of the primeval Canadian forest, you can find only one word to describe the experience: sublime.<sup>1</sup>*

Throughout the nineteenth century, British travellers used their travel books to construct specific images of Canada in Great Britain. These books, also called travel narratives, became popular with the literary community in England during the 1800s, not least because they provided an opportunity for the British to learn about their North American colonies. Robert Allan Fitzgerald, Secretary of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in London, England, wrote one such narrative upon his tour of Canada with W.G. Grace and a team of English gentleman-amateurs during the summer of 1872. Published in England the following year, his travel narrative, *Wickets in the West* (1873), recounts the cricket tour in detail and provides Fitzgerald's imperial perspective on the recently confederated Dominion of Canada.<sup>2</sup>

This essay examines Fitzgerald's book to reveal how he used his travel narrative to construct favorable images of nineteenth-century Canada to the British. I begin with a brief overview of the British travel literary genre. This is followed by a short descriptive outline, summarized in the table, of Fitzgerald's experience of cricket and culture while touring through the Dominion. Having offered a sketch of both the literary context of travel narratives and the MCC tour, I next examine Fitzgerald's constructed images of Canada. First, Fitzgerald used his travel narrative to portray a generally favorable image of Canadian cricket by illustrating the respectable, orderly manner in which Canadians conducted their cricket games. Second, Fitzgerald depicted the Dominion of Canada as a young, energetic, loyal colony of the British Empire by emphasizing specific images of landscape. Finally, Fitzgerald used these images to promote the Dominion to potential English colonists and to his fellow cricketers at the MCC.

Over the last decade, historians have occasionally employed Fitzgerald's book as historical evidence, but without acknowledging the literary context from which *Wickets* emerged.<sup>3</sup> This essay therefore reveals how Fitzgerald constructed his favorable images of Canada by examining *Wickets* within the genre of British travel literature, rather than focusing specifically on the MCC tour of 1872 or the sport of cricket in the Dominion.



Until the early 1800s, the travel guidebook was the primary medium of the British travel literary genre. Guidebooks typically contained descriptive information regarding transportation or geographical information for travellers on a "Grand Tour" of Western European countries.<sup>4</sup> However, by the early 1800s, authors of travel guidebooks began framing their descriptions within personal narratives. The movement away from descriptive science and toward the centrality of the author's own personal experience within travel literature reflected the movement between the Enlightenment and Romantic periods in Europe.<sup>5</sup>

As the nineteenth century progressed, travel narratives became very popular within the literary community in England. By the mid-1800s, publishers in Britain reprinted some travel books in multiple editions and, during this same period, only the novel rivalled travel literature in popularity.<sup>6</sup> Travel authors wrote for specific audiences, including scientific communities, investors, the public, friends, and potential colonists.<sup>7</sup> The popularity of travel narratives stemmed from the combination of practical descriptive information presented within an exciting novel-like narrative by the author. As historian Patricia Jasen has pointed out in *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario 1790–1914*, travel narrators cast themselves as protagonists, with the initial voyage and return home providing the beginning and the end of each adventure.<sup>8</sup> Literary devices such as character development, theme, mood, and suspense were not uncommon and contributed to the popularity of genre.<sup>9</sup> As well as the physical journey to a foreign land, the narrator presented readers with an inward journey that included the subjective opinion of the traveller—sometimes harsh, and sometimes kind.<sup>10</sup> Travel literature in this regard reveals a great deal about the biases and opinions of the authors, alongside their descriptive reports of their foreign surroundings.

In addition to the style of the narrative, the publishing house also plays a role in understanding the literary and historical context surrounding the British travel narrative.

Fitzgerald's *Wickets* emerged from a prominent English publishing house, Tinsley Brothers, in 1873. During the 1860s, Tinsley Brothers became a force in the book trade and the literary scene in London.<sup>11</sup> Their first major success was Mary Elizabeth Braddon's thriller *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862). The three-volume edition of this particular novel became an overnight best-seller in England. Although somewhat unorthodox, William and Edward Tinsley did not develop an editorial department, and writers commissioned by their firm routinely sent manuscripts directly to the printers.<sup>12</sup> Over the course of the firm's existence (1858-1892), Tinsley Brothers developed a reputation apart from other publishing houses with their three-volume manuscripts and their distinctively ornamental binding-boards. Fitzgerald's *Wickets*, for example, holds an engraving of English cricketer W.G. Grace on the front cover.<sup>13</sup> During the late 1860s and early 1870s, the firm published, and in some cases launched the careers of, popular nineteenth-century authors including Braddon, Justin McCarthy, Edmund Yates, and Rosa M. Praed.<sup>14</sup> Although fiction was the mainstay of Tinsley Brothers, the firm also published British travel literature from across the globe, including Fitzgerald's *Wickets* (1873), George Augustus Sala's *My Diary in America* (1865), John Petherick's *Travels in Central Africa* (1869), and Sir Richard Francis Burton's *Explorations of the Highlands of Brazil* (1869). Fitzgerald's travel narrative, therefore, emerged from a respected London firm that published both fiction and traveller literature.

Despite the abundance and richness of nineteenth-century travel books, some historians have labelled the British travel literary genre as inherently problematic. These scholars cite two reasons for their concern. The first suggests that travel books are more akin to fantasy-novels than descriptive-reports, due to their emergence from publishing houses that typically produced fiction.<sup>15</sup> Second, British travellers often embellished their descriptions of natural landscapes, such as cascading waterfalls, majestic mountains, and primeval forests, with romantically evocative prose. Historians who argue against using traveller literature as historical evidence view these seemingly irrelevant descriptions as somehow tainting the source, and are used as examples to reaffirm the view that British travel narratives contain more imagination than description.<sup>16</sup> However, historians who espouse these criticisms are unfamiliar with the literary and historical context from which travel narratives emerged. I will discuss examples of these romantic embellishments, and why travellers wrote them, later in relation to Fitzgerald's *Wickets*.

In addition to understanding the criticisms of the genre, the historian must also acknowledge the central issue of voice when evaluating British traveller literature. In the case of *Wickets*, the reader is presented with Fitzgerald's English gentleman-amateur perspective. However, having recognized voice is not to say that the imperial perspective of the MCC cricketers, or any other British travellers, completely predisposed them to one opinion or another concerning their experiences in Canada or with Canadians. Therefore, in examining *Wickets*, one must acknowledge the Victorian perspective of R.A. Fitzgerald and the English cricketers while being careful not to prejudge, and thus be deterministic, of their experiences.<sup>17</sup>

The original impetus for the Marylebone Cricket Club tour of 1872 came from Thomas Charles Patteson of Toronto. Patteson, editor of the conservative-minded *Toronto Mail* and member of the socially elite Toronto Cricket Club (TCC), devised a plan to recruit an English XI from the MCC in England to tour the Dominion of Canada.<sup>18</sup> The

Overview of the MCC Tour of 1872			
Location and Arrival	Opponent	Red Stockings	Engagements and Tourist Attractions
Quebec City August 17	Quebec City Cricket Club	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falls of Montmorency</li> <li>• Entertained by Governor General at the Citadel</li> <li>• Farewell banquet</li> </ul>
Montreal August 21	Montreal Cricket Club	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapids of Lachine</li> <li>• Photographed by William Notman</li> <li>• Dinner with St. James Club</li> <li>• Farewell banquet</li> </ul>
Ottawa August 26	Ottawa Cricket Club	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visited Notman's Ottawa Gallery</li> <li>• Toured Federal Parliament Buildings</li> <li>• Traversed Chaudiere River</li> <li>• Farewell banquet</li> <li>• Fishing at Thousand Islands (enroute to Toronto)</li> </ul>
Brockville	<i>Cancelled due to miscommunication between Patteson and Fitzgerald</i>		
Toronto September 1	Toronto Cricket Club	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dinner at Royal Yacht Club</li> <li>• Dinner with Lieutenant-Governor Howland</li> <li>• Lyceum Theatre</li> <li>• Excursion to Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching</li> <li>• Photographed by William Notman's Toronto Studio</li> <li>• Farewell banquet</li> </ul>
London September 8	London Cricket Club	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London sulphur bath</li> <li>• Entertained by Mr. Beecher, QC</li> <li>• Farewell banquet</li> </ul>
Hamilton September 11	Hamilton Cricket Club	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farewell banquet</li> </ul>
Niagara September 13	[no game scheduled]	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Niagara Falls</li> <li>• Cave of the Winds Tour (US side)</li> <li>• Niagara Whirlpool</li> <li>• General Isaac Brock's Monument</li> <li>• Farewell banquet (hosted by MCC)</li> </ul>
New York September 18	St. George's Club	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Park</li> <li>• Fleetwood Park Trotting Races</li> </ul>
Philadelphia September 21	Germantown Cricket Club	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farewell banquet (hosted by Union League Club)</li> </ul>
Boston September 25	Boston Cricket Club	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harvard University</li> </ul>

TCC intended to use the team to promote the sport of cricket, which had declined during the late 1860s with the increasing popularity of baseball and lacrosse among the working and middle classes.<sup>19</sup> In order to follow through with the plan, Patteson contacted and ensured the participation of the foremost cricket clubs in Quebec (Quebec and Montreal) and Ontario (Ottawa, Brockville, Toronto, London, and Hamilton).<sup>20</sup> These clubs, through donations to a general fund, paid the expenses of the team. Although an exact financial sum from these clubs is unknown, Patteson did acknowledge that he personally contributed \$1,500 to help defray expenses of the MCC team.<sup>21</sup>

With the participation and financial backing of cricket clubs in both Ontario and Quebec, Patteson travelled to England during the summer of 1871 and consulted with Fitzgerald in London. He reassured the MCC Secretary of liberal financial backing from the Canadians on the condition that the team included cricketer W.G. Grace.<sup>22</sup> Both Patteson and the cricket clubs involved understood the financial and popular draw of this talented cricketer, regarded as a national sport hero in England during this period.<sup>23</sup> Thus, in addition to the vaunted Grace, the tour could also boast the involvement of the prestigious MCC, held by at least one historian to be the “Vatican” of nineteenth-century cricket.<sup>24</sup> Fitzgerald later acknowledged his decision to participate in the tour was the result of his personal curiosity to see the new Dominion and, “to eke out a novel holiday.”<sup>25</sup>

Except in Montreal, the cricketers drew large crowds while on tour in Canada. The Montreal *Herald* and *Gazette* both bemoaned the poor turnout in the city and sarcastically suggested that had the day’s activities consisted of lacrosse and not cricket, a much larger crowd would have gathered.<sup>26</sup> Besides lacrosse, the MCC cricket tour also contended for popular attention with an early tour of baseball’s Boston Red Stockings through Ontario and Quebec.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to Montreal, the English cricketers enjoyed crowds numbering several thousand while in Toronto.<sup>28</sup> In addition to the daily media attention from special correspondents from the Toronto *Globe* and Toronto *Mail* throughout the tour, *Bell’s Life* (London, England) offered repeated updates on the progress of the MCC team.<sup>29</sup> By the time the English cricketers arrived in Canada, Americans from New York, Philadelphia, and Boston expressed interest in the Marylebone cricketers and extended invitations to host the team. To accommodate the Americans, Fitzgerald extended the MCC tour into late September of 1872. These three games occurred within a total of seven days and supplemented the Canadian tour.<sup>30</sup> Regardless of Canadian or American location, the 11 Marylebone cricketers played against teams of 22 throughout the tour.<sup>31</sup>

Beyond the confines of the cricket field, Fitzgerald and the Marylebone XI experienced a taste of Canadian culture while travelling through the Dominion. Cricket clubs in Quebec and Ontario treated the MCC cricketers as esteemed guests and arranged numerous “must-do” tourist excursions for the team. In Quebec City, the cricketers journeyed to the Falls of Montmorency, and in Montreal they shot the rapids of Lachine and visited the studio of celebrated photographer William Notman.<sup>32</sup> Later, in Ottawa, they traversed the Chaudiere River and toured the Federal Parliament Buildings.<sup>33</sup> While in Toronto, Colonel Frederick Cumberland (MPP,) a member of the TCC and managing director of the Great Northern Railway, organized a day-excursion to Muskoka, specifically Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching.<sup>34</sup> Fitzgerald, the MCC cricketers, and the excursion party boarded the steamer *Emily May* at Allandale, and travelled to Barrie via Orillia.<sup>35</sup> While in Toronto,

the cricketers also visited the Lyceum Theatre and the Toronto-based studio of William Notman photographed the team.<sup>36</sup> In London, the MCC cricketers travelled to the local sulphur bath and later at Niagara, they visited Niagara Falls, the Niagara Whirlpool, and the monument to the victorious 1812 war general, Isaac Brock, on Queenston Heights.<sup>37</sup> Although time constraints limited sightseeing in the United States, the Marylebone cricketers did manage to observe trotting races and visit Central Park in New York City.<sup>38</sup> While in Boston, a local cricket club arranged a tour of nearby Harvard University for the gentleman-amateurs, and the famous baseball brothers, Harry and George Wright, presented each cricketer with a baseball.<sup>39</sup> In addition to taking the English cricketers on local sightseeing excursions, cricket clubs in Quebec and Ontario also held farewell dinners to honor the presence of the cricketers at which the local elite were present.<sup>40</sup> These clubs clearly spared no expense to entertain the English amateurs and display the Dominion of Canada to its best advantage.

The Canadians' exhaustive efforts to provide appropriate hospitality for the gentleman amateurs, both on and off the cricket field, favorably influenced Fitzgerald's view of Canada within *Wickets*. Specifically, Fitzgerald stated he wished to engender, "a heartier feeling towards Canada and Canadians."<sup>41</sup> In order to develop this "heartier feeling", Fitzgerald portrayed Canada as firmly connected to British institutions in an attempt to appeal, and then to educate, his readers about the newly formed Dominion. Fitzgerald wrote, "Our object is to place on record the details that made our expedition so pleasant, to do justice to our hosts, and to furnish, what we unhappily believe to be required, convincing proof of Canadian attachment to the old country."<sup>42</sup> Continuing the point, Fitzgerald stated that Canadians are sensitive towards issues regarding, "loyalty to the Queen, and devotion to British institutions. They believe that ignorance on some points and prejudice on others prevail in England, which tend to separate rather than to knit together the Mother Country and her colony."<sup>43</sup> Although Fitzgerald stated the purpose of his travel narrative, he did not explicitly establish the breadth of his literary audience. It is logical to assume that his readership consisted, at least in part, of fellow cricketers from the aristocratic MCC. As the secretary of the Marylebone club, Fitzgerald likely targeted this group as having an interest in both the exploits of their clubmates and learning about cricket in Canada. In sum, Fitzgerald not only put forth an explicitly favorable view of the Dominion but he also attempted to further this view by educating his readers about the new colony and by establishing Canada's firm connection to English institutions.

To illustrate Canada's connection to Great Britain, Fitzgerald emphasized the English institution of cricket. Fitzgerald provided a favorable image of the Dominion to his readers by praising the respectable, orderly manner in which Canadians conducted their cricket games and portrayed Canadian opponents in the cricketer-as-gentleman mode. Historians have used this characterization to illustrate that winning represented only one aspect of cricket during this period; conduct, deportment, and style within the confines of sporting "manliness" were equally as important.<sup>44</sup> Conducting the game in a refined and dignified style befitting respectable gentlemen was of utmost importance to cricketers throughout the nineteenth century. Moreover, these qualities were so highly regarded that the idea of the gentleman-cricketer became lionized within the game itself.<sup>45</sup> In his travel narrative, Fitzgerald praised this important aspect of Canadian conduct, stating that "In every place

the game was played in the genuine spirit of cricket and it is most gratifying to record that throughout the tour not one single question arose between us... to disturb the harmony that should always prevail amongst cricketers."<sup>46</sup> These words, from the secretary of the prestigious MCC, were indeed high praise and cast Canada in a favorable light to Fitzgerald's audience. By applauding Canadian conduct, Fitzgerald sent a clear message to his clubmates at the MCC about cricket and Canadians: Canadians are becoming, orderly sportsmen who played the imperial game of cricket in a noble and dignified manner.

In addition to the conduct of Canadian cricketers, Fitzgerald emphasized specific events on the tour to further construct his image of the Dominion and to reinforce Canada's devotion to Empire. The cricketers' trip to the Lyceum Theatre during their stay in Toronto received particular attention. The cricketers arrived late to the theatre and were immediately recognized by the audience as the MCC XI. The performance suddenly stopped and the band struck up with "Rule Britannia."<sup>47</sup> The audience and the actors gave the cricketers a standing ovation that lasted several minutes. At the conclusion of this imperial greeting, "the prompter had some difficulty in recalling them [the actors] to their suspended avocation."<sup>48</sup> This particular instance, which equated Canadian-ness with British-ness, remained with Fitzgerald and the MCC cricketers for some time. He wrote a further description of the event in *Bell's Life*, stating the thought of that greeting "makes our blood tingle still and if one word more than another can appeal to the heart of English cricketers, it is Toronto."<sup>49</sup>



"Gentlemen of England Cricket Team, Montreal" (composite photograph). R.A. Fitzgerald is standing with his notebook on the left; W.G. Grace is standing in the center at the wicket. *Courtesy Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal.*

Fitzgerald also emphasized particular images of landscape in his construction of nineteenth-century Canada. In doing so, Fitzgerald clearly made an effort to embellish his accounts. As mentioned earlier, evocative literary embellishments of landscape were common in nineteenth-century British travel literature. In *Wild Things*, Jasen states that the allure of the wilderness and wild places of Canada created a competitive literary atmosphere within British travel culture in England. British travel writers vied “with each other to produce the most lavishly romantic descriptions,” particularly of Niagara Falls and Canadian West.<sup>50</sup> Fitzgerald’s account of Niagara Falls was typical of such travel narratives. Fitzgerald employed an 1850s you-are-there, present-tense style of narration.<sup>51</sup> In his account of the Falls, Fitzgerald himself acknowledged that he had previously read travel narratives:

The increase of foam in the water beneath, the sullen roar that first strikes the ear, the feathery cloud floating into the clear sky from one point only into a spiral column, these first indications of the approach to Niagara—are they not written in every diary? Our sentiments we cannot reproduce; the feelings on the first view of the Great Falls are beyond poetry; words do not rise spontaneously upon the lips, as, entranced with the majesty of the falling water, you gaze upon the scene before you; words cannot describe all you feel when the first sensation has passed away. The feeling is that of absorption.<sup>52</sup>

This style of narration evolved in response to readership demands. By the mid-nineteenth century, straight narrative description had fallen out of literary favor within British travel culture. In response, travel authors attempted to place the reader within the experience itself through you-are-there, present-tense accounts similar to the narration above. Yet Fitzgerald’s description, and others like it, did not exist independently of each other. As mentioned, British travellers frequently vied with each other to produce the most “authentic” description of Niagara Falls. On this point, Fitzgerald was no exception. He took issue with earlier authors’ accounts of sound and complained that the roar of the Falls “is not so audible as many writers state.”<sup>53</sup> Fitzgerald then qualified his remarks and in doing so revealed the travellers’ penchant for literary embellishment, “[the roar] probably depends upon the wind, but an air of exaggeration may reasonably be allowed to blow from such a source [Niagara Falls].”<sup>54</sup> Fitzgerald’s exaggerated “blowing” extended beyond his account of Niagara Falls. Fitzgerald made other obvious literary efforts to romanticize the Canadian wilderness, the Chaudiere Falls, and particularly the history of Quebec City and Montreal by employing images of explorer Jacques Cartier.<sup>55</sup>

While providing alluring images of the Canadian landscape, Fitzgerald also played the Dominion’s nobility and newness. The MCC secretary commented on the evocative quest of the Northern Pacific Railway that was to link the east and west of the new Dominion:

To our mind the idea itself sufficiently confirms the experiment. To penetrate vast regions at present inaccessible... to connect the Atlantic with the Pacific shore [by railway]; to bind the Dominion together; to give it what it has long needed; a spinal column with vertebrae of iron, and so strengthen its dependencies on either hand, appeals most forcibly to the imagination.<sup>56</sup>

Fitzgerald continued his narration of westward expansion by portraying Canada as a young, energetic, and opportunistic destination for the potential English colonist:

The most careless observer in Canada cannot fail to perceive that there are signs of development throughout the country... There is a marked appearance of independence and self-confidence. The people believe in their future. The resources of the north-west are to a great extent unfathomed... The forest, the rivers, the great lakes speak for themselves; food, fuel, and locomotion are within the grasp of all who penetrate these solitudes.<sup>57</sup>

These elaborate descriptions, within the confines of Fitzgerald's explicitly favorable view of Canada, created an appeal, and allure for, the emerging new Dominion. In addition to the cricketer-as-gentleman image, these lavish descriptions further contributed to the constructed literary message sent to England. Historian Kevin Wamsley argues in his study of nineteenth-century sport tours that this message essentially depicted Canada as "a resource-rich, conquered wild-land, in the control of competent gentlemen, offering advantages to all those who chose to emigrate or to conduct business."<sup>58</sup>

In addition to using his narrative to evoke images of Canada both new and old, Fitzgerald, in characteristic British traveller fashion, also used music to construct the Dominion in the minds of his readers. The role of song and music provides an interesting facet of British travel literature. As Jasen has pointed out, voyageur boat songs evoked images of Canada as forcefully as poetry or narrative for the British traveller.<sup>59</sup> Within British travel culture, the "Canadian Boat Song," written by Thomas Moore in 1804, provided the yardstick by which one judged all other boat songs.<sup>60</sup> The "Canadian Boat Song" immortalized the voyageurs' annual pilgrimage to their shrine at St. Anne's (near where the Ottawa River and St. Lawrence converge) and reads:

Faintly as tolls the evening chimes,  
Our voices keep tune, and our oars keep time  
Soon as the woods on shore look dim,  
We'll sing at St. Anne's our parting hymn.  
Row, brothers, row! The stream runs fast,  
The rapids are near, and the day-light's past!<sup>61</sup>

Sung aloud among a group of would-be-travellers, these boat songs provided popular drawing-room and dinner-party amusement at home in England throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Those interested in Canada commonly sang the boat songs written in other travellers' narratives and constructed their own images of noble voyageurs, dashing native scouts, and the savage Canadian wilderness, completely removed from their Canadian context. Upon visiting Canada for the first time, some British travellers balked at songs performed by resident Canadian voyageurs and boatmen, as their performance seemed fraudulent compared to the image constructed by Victorians in Great Britain.<sup>63</sup>

Inspired by the steamer voyage from Montreal to Ottawa that took them by the voyageurs' shrine at St. Anne's, Fitzgerald, Grace, and the Marylebone cricketers began singing Moore's "Canadian Boat Song."<sup>64</sup> Invigorated by the team's rendition, cricketer A. Appleby composed a boat song of his own. Appleby used the "Canadian Boat Song" as a guide for his own "Song of the Fast Bowler," changing the chorus of "Row, Brothers, Row"

to “Field, Brothers, Field.” Fitzgerald included the six-verse boat song in his travel narrative. The first verse reads:

Stand to your stumps! The toss is won;  
 I shall bowl you all out ere the day is done;  
 Breathes the Kanuk, who can withstand  
 The ball as it leaves my big left hand!  
 Field, Brothers, Field, my rapids are near  
 To the sticks, and the shooters a way will clear.<sup>65</sup>

Appleby’s composition, and Fitzgerald’s inclusion of it in his narrative, reveals the British travellers’ romantic fascination throughout the nineteenth century with images of stalwart Canadian voyageurs and fur traders gallantly advancing through the vastness of the Canadian wild.<sup>66</sup> Fitzgerald’s indication that many of the cricketers knew the words to the Canadian Boat Song, without a copy of the lyrics on hand, also demonstrates their personal knowledge of popular mid nineteenth-century British traveller literature.<sup>67</sup> Overall, Fitzgerald used his constructed images, either through narrative or music, to reinforce his favorable view of Canada.

However, Fitzgerald did not promote the Dominion merely as a literary exercise. The MCC secretary used his romantically evocative images to create an argument for Cana-



R.A. Fitzgerald (46) stands in the center foreground. T.C. Patteson (3) stands in the center midground, near W.G. Grace (1). *Courtesy Archives of Ontario, Toronto.*

dian immigration. On this point, Fitzgerald's narrative again reflects the broader genre of British traveller literature, in which immigration remained a pervasive and popular theme throughout the 1800s.<sup>68</sup> Alongside his favorable view of Canada, Fitzgerald explicitly and enthusiastically accepted the role of cricketer turned immigration agent. During the cricketers' excursion to Muskoka during their stay in Toronto, Fitzgerald noted, "Col. Cumberland... remarked enroute that the Englishmen were not only cricketers but emigration commissioners. We accept the latter title with pleasure for them."<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, throughout the tour, Fitzgerald repeatedly accepted of the role of immigration agent as revealed by press. At their farewell dinner with the Ottawa Cricket Club, Fitzgerald responded to a toast of the MCC XI by offering to extol the advantages that Canada possessed for potential emigrants upon returning to England.<sup>70</sup> Fitzgerald again provided similar commentary at the farewell dinner given by the TCC, saying the English cricketers would become accomplished immigration agents on behalf of the Dominion.<sup>71</sup>

Fitzgerald's argument for immigration emerged from within his previously constructed images of Canada. These images revealed Canadians as noble sportsmen, based in the English tradition, through the cricketer-as-gentleman characterization. Fitzgerald also created a sense of history for the country by drawing upon the evocative music and images of the voyageurs. He then contrasted this sense of history with quest-like accounts of Canada's burgeoning national pursuits to develop an optimistic future for the young Dominion. Each of these images reinforced Fitzgerald's stated objective of presenting a favorable view of Canada, while also creating excitement for immigration. He stated that Canada needs "English hearts and English hands to aid in the development of the country," and that immigration "is the word on everybody's mouth."<sup>72</sup> Fitzgerald targeted his discussion at English agricultural laborers. He observed that Canada, "is not the country for the aspiring clerk, [or] the ambitious juvenile... that class of emigrants is pre-eminently undesirable."<sup>73</sup> What Canada needed, Fitzgerald argued, was physically strong English laborers. If these laborers could use the plough or the axe, he continued, they would find opportunities for employment with agricultural firms or railway companies in the Dominion.<sup>74</sup> While presenting his position on Canadian immigration, Fitzgerald downplayed criticisms levelled by other travellers and American immigration agents in Europe.<sup>75</sup> In particular, he addressed concerns over the harshness of the Canadian winter by portraying the season as a time of social and recreational amusement for Canadians.<sup>76</sup> Fitzgerald summarily justified his favorable view of Canada and Canadian immigration by stating, "Englishmen should know what advantages are open to them across the Atlantic, in a country which is English to the backbone, albeit separated by a vast ocean."<sup>77</sup>



Robert Allan Fitzgerald used his travel narrative *Wickets in the West* to construct favorable images of nineteenth-century Canada to the British. Fitzgerald's motivations for constructing such images lay on both sides of the Atlantic. In terms of Canada, Fitzgerald explicitly stated he wished to repay the kindness shown by Thomas Patteson and the TCC, and, to that end, presented a view of the Dominion that was acceptable to the Canadians. On their behalf, Fitzgerald also accepted the role of immigration agent and used his travel narrative to construct and direct specific images of the Dominion towards potential En-

glish emigrants. Yet this interpretation only accounts for part of Fitzgerald's construction of Canada in *Wickets*. Fitzgerald also directed his evocative descriptions and commentary on Canadian cricketers to his social peers and club-mates at the prestigious MCC in London, England. Moreover, these readers, versed in British travel culture and literature, expected, and likely would have been disappointed, if Fitzgerald did not exercise his literary license when describing the Dominion of Canada.

On a broader level, this study builds on the established body of sport history literature by historians Don Morrow and Kevin Wamsley. Both historians argue that various nineteenth-century sporting tours played a role in constructing a British image of Canada.<sup>78</sup> Although their studies did not specifically focus on travel narratives, these historians found that the images constructed through tours of lacrosse and rifle shooting held both explicit and implicit messages of immigration and nationalism. Examining *Wickets* reaffirms this conclusion, while contributing new insights on nineteenth-century sport tours. Much can be learned about Canada, and the image of Canada constructed in Great Britain, by examining sport-related British travel narratives within their nineteenth-century literary context.<sup>79</sup>

The image of noble voyageurs slowly fading into the primeval wilderness may have been contrived; however, it remained a powerful and evocative image of Canada for readers of British travel literature during the nineteenth-century. By catching the readers attention with romantically evocative prose, British travel writers satisfied readership interests while putting forth their own image of abroad based on their own personal experiences. In the case of *Wickets in the West*, Fitzgerald directed his travel narrative towards audiences on both sides of the Atlantic and in doing so constructed specific images of cricket, culture, and nineteenth-century Canada.

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1. For examples of both romantic images and critical commentary on Canadian voyageurs within British travel narratives, see Sir Richard H. Bonnycastle, *The Canadas in 1841* (London: H. Colburn, 1842), 94–95; Frederick Fitzgerald De Roos, *Personal Narrative of Travels in the United States and Canada in 1826* (London: William Harrison Ainsworth, 1827), 123; Hugh Gray, *Letters from Canada Written During a Residence there in the Years 1806, 1807, and 1808* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1809), 154–156; George Heriot, *Travels Through the Canadas* (London: Philips, 1807), 103; Sir George Head, *Forest Scenes and Incidents in the Wilds of North America; A Diary of a Winter's Route from Halifax to the Canadas, and During Four Months' Residence in the Woods on the Borders of Lakes Huron and Simcoe*, 2d ed. (London: John Murray, 1838), 242–343; Charles Lanman, *Adventures in the Wilds of the United States and British American Provinces* (Philadelphia: J.W. Moore, 1856), 114.
  2. R.A. Fitzgerald, *Wickets in the West* (London: Tinsley Bros., 1873).
  3. David Brown, "Canadian Imperialism and Sporting Exchanges: The Nineteenth-Century Cultural Experience of Cricket and Lacrosse," *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport* 18 (1): 61 (1987); David Cooper, "Canadians Declare "It Isn't Cricket": A Century of Rejection of the Imperial Game, 1860–1960," *Journal of Sport History* 26 (1): 56 (1999); Charles A. Joyce, "At Close of Play: The Evolution of Cricket in London, Ontario 1836–1902" (M.A. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1988), 104–105.
  4. Percy G. Adams, "Travel Literature Before 1800—Its History, Its Types, Its Influence," in *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983). 38; William W. Stowe, "Guidebooks: The Liturgy of Travel," in *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-century American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 29.

5. Casey Blanton, "Narrating Self and Other: A Historical Overview," in *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (New York: Twayne Pubs., 1997), 15; Charles L. Batten, Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 46.
6. Joanne Shattock, "Travel Writing Victorian and Modern: A Review of Recent Research," in *The Art of Travel: Essays on Travel Writing*, ed. Philip Dodd (London: Frank Cass, 1982), 154; Hilary Fraser with Daniel Brown, "Travel and Exploration Literature," in *English Prose of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1996), 56. For an overview see Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 3–28.
7. Catherine Barnes Stevenson, "Women Travellers and the Art of Travel Writing," in *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa* (Boston: Twayne Pubs., 1982), 1–13.
8. Jasen, *Wild Things*, 27.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Catherine Barnes Stevenson, "Women Travellers," 6–7; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 27.
11. The information for this paragraph taken from the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Volume 106, "British Literary Publishing Houses, 1820–1880," *s.v.* Tinsley Brothers.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Fitzgerald, *Wickets* (London: Tinsley Bros., 1873), cover.
14. *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Volume 106, "British Literary Publishing Houses, 1820–1880," *s.v.* Tinsley Brothers.
15. Jasen, *Wild Things*, 26. David K. Wiggins raised similar concerns in, "Work, Leisure and Sport in America: The British Travelers Image, 1830–1860," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 18 (1): 28–60 (1982).
16. Adams, "Travel Literature," 72–73.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 9–10. Also see undated articles from *Bell's Life and Sporting Chronicle in London* (England) and the *Toronto Mail*, reprinted in *Wickets*, 321–322, 196–97; *Toronto Mail*, Sep. 16, 1872; and the *Montreal Herald*, Aug. 23, 1872. For more on Thomas Patteson see *The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, *s.v.* Patteson; Thomas Charles and the Biography of Thomas Charles Patteson, Thomas Charles Patteson Papers, Archives of Ontario (AO), F1191, MU 2308, 2309; AO "Reminiscences of Thomas Charles Patteson," Microfilm, MS49, 29.
19. For more on the rejection of popular support for cricket, see Nancy B. Bouchier, "'Aristocrats' and Their 'Noble Sport': Woodstock Officers and Cricket During the Rebellion Era," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 20 (1): 21–23 (1989); Cooper, "Canadians Declare," 51–81; Allan Elton Cox, "A History of Sports in Canada, 1868–1900" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 1969), 70–80, 428–434; Peter Leslie Lindsay, "A History of Sport in Canada, 1807–1967" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 1969), 90–108, 286–293. See also Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 325–326.
20. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 9–10.
21. AO, "Reminiscences of Thomas Charles Patteson," Microfilm, MS49, 16.
22. In addition to Fitzgerald and W.G. Grace, the team included C.J. Ottaway, A.N. Hornby, A. Lubbock, Hon. G. Harris, C.K. Francis, E. Lubbock, A. Appleby, W.M. Rose, F. Pickering, and W.H. Hadow. The professional cricketer Farrands accompanied the team of gentleman amateurs and umpired several games. See Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 11–12, 321–322; *Montreal Gazette*, Aug. 23, 1872; *Toronto Mail*, Sep. 9, 1872.
23. Richard Cashman, "Symbols of Unity: Anglo-Australian Cricketers, 1877–1900," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 7 (1): 100 (1990); Richard Holt, "Cricket and Englishness: The Batsman as Hero," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 13 (1): 54 (1996).
24. James Bradley, "The MCC, Society and Empire: A Portrait of Cricket's Ruling Body," in *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society*, ed. J.A. Mangan (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1992), 27.

25. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 317.
26. Montreal *Herald*, Aug. 24, 1872. See also Montreal *Gazette*, Aug. 26, 1872.
27. The tour of the Red Stockings preceded, coincided with, or followed the MCC cricket tour through Quebec and Ontario, with the only two exceptions being Quebec City and Hamilton. In Ottawa, for example, the spectators had the opportunity to observe the MCC cricketers against the Ottawa Cricket Club in the late morning and the Red Stockings baseball game in the afternoon. Several of the Red Stockings watched a portion of the cricket match and observed W. G. Grace at the wicket. The Red Stockings commented afterwards in the Montreal *Gazette* that the game was so slow the cricketers lost “time enough in making ‘overs’ to grow a nation.” In Toronto and London, the cricketers arrived days after the Boston Red Stockings played and provided an exhibition of their talents. Despite the repeated “coincidence” of meeting the Red Stockings, R.A. Fitzgerald only made literary reference to the Red Stockings while discussing the city of Boston during the American section of the tour. Montreal *Gazette*, Aug. 29, 1872; Toronto *Globe*, Aug. 24, 26, 30, 1872; Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 292–293. For more on early Red Stocking baseball tours see Robert Knight Barney, “Of Rails and Red Stockings: Episodes in the Expansion of the ‘National Pastime’ in the American West,” *Journal of the West* 17 (3): 61–69 (1978).
28. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 93, 100; Toronto *Globe*, Sep. 3, 4, 1872; Toronto *Mail*, Sep. 3, 1872.
29. In terms of special correspondents, the *Globe* and the *Mail* published articles relating to the MCC cricketers under the title “By our special correspondent.” The correspondent for the *Mail* also accompanied the Englishmen on the American segment of their journey through New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. In *Wickets in the West*, Fitzgerald identified the correspondents as “Stiff” and “Strong” but did not name them. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 20, 65; *Bell’s Life and Sporting Chronicle in London*, Sep. 21, Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26, 1872. *Bell’s Life* was a weekly newspaper during this period.
30. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 10 and 224. Also see chapters I–III of the section entitled “In the States”.
31. The only exception was a game that mixed two XI’s of the Toronto Cricket Club with the Marylebone cricketers. MCC cricketers Grace and Appleby captained these teams. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 138; Toronto *Globe*, Sep. 7, 1872.
32. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 57. For more on William Notman, Canada’s foremost nineteenth-century photographer, and the time-consuming process of creating composite photographs, see Roger Hall, Gordon Dodds, and Stanley Triggs, *The World of William Notman: The Nineteenth Century Through a Master Lens* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1993); J. Russel Harper and Stanley Triggs, *Portrait of a Period, A Collection of Notman Photographs, 1856–1915* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967); and Heinz K. Henisch and Bridget A. Henisch, *The Painted Photograph. 1839–1914: Origins, Techniques, Aspirations* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).
33. Toronto *Mail*, Aug. 30, 1872.
34. Coupled with white settlement, the tourist industry was on the rise in Muskoka by the early 1860s. By 1863, the steamers *Fairy* and *Emily May* provided access around greater Muskoka and to points previously accessible only by canoe. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 109; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 117; Toronto *Globe*, Aug. 30, 1872.
35. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 113–115.
36. This key would have accompanied the actual Notman composite photograph to identify the Marylebone and Toronto Club cricketers depicted in the fore- and midground. The individuals named represent the social and economic elite of Toronto: university professors, medical doctors, military officers, prominent businessmen, and political leaders. Archives of Ontario, Special Collections, Photography Unit, Sports and Recreation: Cricket, 1872; Toronto *Mail*, Sep. 7, 1872. Also see Stanley Fillmore, *The Pleasure of the Game: Toronto Cricket, Skating, and Curling Club, 1827–1977* (Toronto: Hunter Rose Co., 1977), 47–49.
37. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 184–194.
38. *Ibid.*, 226–227.
39. *Ibid.*, 282, 291.

40. Montreal *Herald*, Aug. 23, 1872; Montreal *Gazette*, Aug. 23, 1872; Ottawa *Citizen*, Aug. 30, 1872; Toronto *Globe*, Aug. 30, 1872; Toronto *Mail*, Sep. 7, 1872.
41. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 4.
42. *Ibid.*, 7–8, 326.
43. *Ibid.*, 328.
44. Daryl Adair, Murray Philips, and John Nauright, “Sporting Manhood in Australia: Test Cricket, Rugby Football, and the Imperial Connection, 1878–1918,” *Sport History Review* 28 (1): 48–49 (1997). In addition to the importance of conduct, the use of international cricket tours as a cultural bond of Empire has been the topic of much scholarly attention. See J.A. Mangan, ed., *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1992) and Brown, “Sporting Exchanges,” 55; Richard Cashman, “Symbols of Unity,” 99; John Nauright, “Sport and the Image of Colonial Manhood in the British Mind: British Physical Deterioration Debates and Colonial Sporting Tours, 1878–1906,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 23 (2): 67 (1992).
45. Adair, *et al.*, “Sporting Manhood,” 56.
46. *Bell’s Life and Sporting Chronicle in London*, Oct. 12, 1872; Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 57, 100, 106, 156, 177.
47. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 142.
48. *Ibid.*, 142–143.
49. *Bell’s Life and Sporting Chronicle in London*, Oct. 12, 1872.
50. Jasen, *Wild Things*, 59.
51. Patricia Jasen, “From Nature to Culture: The St. Lawrence River Panorama in Nineteenth-Century Ontario Tourism,” *Ontario History* 85 (1): 56 (1993).
52. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 183.
53. *Ibid.*, 184.
54. While at Niagara Falls, Fitzgerald and the Marylebone cricketers participated in a tour of the Cave of the Winds for \$1.50 each. Formed by an outcropping of rock underneath the American side, the Cave of the Winds provided a tourist attraction for those viewing the Falls. The attraction included a diploma that Fitzgerald included in his travel narrative as it conferred, “a distinction upon the traveller.” Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 184, 187, 191.
55. *Ibid.*, 40–41, 60, 84.
56. *Ibid.*, 111 (insertion mine).
57. *Ibid.*, 112.
58. Kevin Wamsley, “Nineteenth Century Sports Tours, State Formation, and Canadian Foreign Policy,” *Sporting Traditions* 13 (2): 86 (1997).
59. Jasen, “From Nature,” 50.
60. *Ibid.*, 51.
61. Edward Allen Talbot, *Five Years’ Residence in the Canadas* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1824), 85.
62. Jasen, “From Nature,” 51.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 67.
65. *Ibid.*, 68.
66. See note 1.
67. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 67.
68. See G.M. Craig, “British Travellers in Upper Canada, 1815–1837,” *Ontario History* 43 (4): 177–187 (1951) and G.M. Craig, *Early Travellers in the Canadas, 1791–1867* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1955), xviii.

69. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 329–330.
70. *Ottawa Citizen*, Aug. 30, 1872.
71. *Toronto Mail*, Sep. 7. 1872.
72. Fitzgerald, *Wickets*, 120–121.
73. *Ibid.*, 125.
74. *Ibid.*, 127.
75. *Ibid.*, 123–124.
76. *Ibid.*, 124.
77. *Ibid.*, 125.
78. Brown, “Sporting Exchanges,” 55; Don Morrow, “The Canadian Image Abroad: The Great Lacrosse Tours of 1876 and 1883,” *Proceedings of the Fifth Canadian Symposium on the History of Sport*, Toronto, 1982, 11–23 and Wamsley, “State Formation,” 73–89.
79. Fitzgerald’s *Wickets in the West* remains only one book within a set of travel narratives devoted to sport, recreation, and leisure that have yet to be critically scrutinised. In terms of cricket, further studies could potentially examine Frederick Lillywhite’s, *The English Cricketers’ Trip to Canada and the United States* (London: F. Lillywhite, 1860), George Lindsey’s, *Cricket Across the Sea* (Toronto: J. Murray, 1887).