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## Why We Left England

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Why did we come to Nova Scotia? This was something about which father never spoke. There was something strange about it and none of us had the temerity to ask him. My brother James told me that one night he was lying on the sofa as if asleep and he heard mother say to father "You know, Jamie, a gun was the cause of all our trouble. Apart from that neither he nor any of us knew anything more. It was only long afterwards and only a few years ago that I came upon a copy of a letter that threw light on the whole distressing story.

And speaking of guns, father was always infatuated with them. He brought a very fine double barrelled gun with him when we left England, and he always had two or three guns, a rifle and a revolver or two. He was a crack shot. When I was very little I recall one New Year's day when he came home from a goose-shoot greatly disturbed, saying, "I don't understand it, I don't understand it". He never found out but we boys did but never dared to tell him. Goose-shoots have gone out of date these many years but it was a money-making proposition for the man getting up the shoot. A dressed goose was put up for a target at a very considerable distance and, if my memory serves me right, the cost was a dollar a shot. If you hit it, the goose was yours; if you missed, you lost your dollar. Father got first one and then another, until he had four or five. The man, running the shoot, saw his hopes ~~disappearing~~ disappearing and when father's attention was distracted, the rest being privy to the act, he changed the sights on the rifle and from then on father fired one shot after another to no avail. He didn't tumble to the trick, ~~and~~ no one breathed a word. and, so far as I know, he never found out.

It is difficult to recreate life in the middle of the eighteenth century but my grandfather, Alexander Farquhar, leased the farm of Trochail in 1820 and had nearly completed his third lease when he retired in 1876. He was born in 1797 and died in 1890. He did well with the farm as is manifest in that he loaned

my uncles, Alexander and William, a thousand pounds when they opened their draper's store in West Kensington, London. But my father was a bit of a gay blade in his early years and, I surmise, was too much so to please his father. Whiskey flowed like water in those days and, I suspect, father was not behindhand in his devotion to the national drink. In point of fact until he died grandfather honored the once national custom and no visitor ever crossed his threshold without the offer of a dram. That custom was abolished in that household only when he died in 1890. At the Birnie school father was the brilliant pupil. I have since met two of his old school mates, who have both been very successful, and both said they had thought father would go farther than them all. Though he weighed around two hundred, father was as light as a cat on his feet, was at all the dances and with his violin was in wide demand. At the same time he was a very fine reader and could imitate anybody, while also a ready and able speaker. Thus he was in wide demand and made much of.

As so often happens in the later teens, he and his father did not get on well together. His father wanted to send him to the university, but he would have none of it. Finally matters came to the breaking point, he left home, went to Glasgow and joined the police. He was an able and efficient officer. From Glasgow he went to Normanton and finally to Wetherby in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Superintendant Kane was a great personal friend with whom he corresponded for years after leaving England.

Only once do I recall him telling some of his more dangerous experiences and that was one night when an old Yorkshire man, "old Johnny Poole" as we used to call him, stayed the evening and father brought out his old uniforms. In his time as a detective officer he gathered the evidence which sent four murderers to the gallows. Once he was struck in the face with a small crow-bar but managed to get his man. He never shaved his upper lip afterward. In a word he had a fine record, had risen to the rank of Inspector and was next in line to succeed Kane.

Why then with promotion in the offing did he drop everything, on July tenth draw his savings from the North of Scotland Bank, dispose of his furniture, and on July 17th board the Nova Scotian for Halifax? A letter from Aunt Jane, dated September 1, 1883, written in reply to one from Halifax, tells how she had written to Wetherby and had her letter returned. Without the knowledge of anybody except probably Superintendent Kane he left the country. Why? The following letter, which I discovered not such a great while ago, throws light on the secret which in his lifetime he never disclosed.

Thorpark.

June 3, 1883.

Sir:

I have authorised Inspector Farquhar to shoot in Mr. Holden's woods but not to shoot game. He has been with me on several occasions shooting Rooks and Wood Pigeons and a few Rabbits---- he met me in the woods last week for the purpose of assisting me to kill some Carrion Crows. As we did not find them I wished him to kill them as the place is very far away from me and he had permission to go in my absence.

Your obedient servant,

Mr. Superintendent  
Kane,  
Tadcaster.

Chas Whitworth.

Now as is well known for uncounted years the game laws have been very strict in England. Since the time of the Conqueror game has been guarded with a jealous eye. In the earlier nineteenth century the penalty was transportation to Tasmania. Though these extreme penalties have been removed long since, the game laws were rigorously enforced.

It requires no imagination to reconstruct the situation. Father was found alone shooting in the Laird's game preserves. There is a long established rule in English law, known by its Latin tag "Delegatus non delegari", "that which is delegated cannot be delegated". I can well recall it for he won an auto case in Alberta by pleading the old rule. Thus the permission given father by the

game-keeper was worthless. This meant not merely the imposition of a penalty but father's immediate dismissal from the force. At one blow everything was gone, his assured future blasted in a night. What was he to do?

His thought turned to Nova Scotia. There his father's brother, John Farquhar, had gone and prospered though he was dead long since: there his father's cousin, the Hon. William Annand, had become Premier of the province and he was still alive: and there in Halifax, lived a cousin, James Farquhar, a banker and broker, who had prospered. So without telling anyone he was going and without communicating with anybody overseas, he sold his furniture, drew his savings from the North of Scotland Bank Ltd., took passage on the Nova Scotian and left the docks of Liverpool on July 17, 1883. A sad story to which he never referred throughout his long life but I am setting it down here that my children may know the true story of our Hegira.