

bravery and worth, and which never has shone more brightly and with less of affectation, than in the present instance.

And in the nights of winter,  
 When the cold north winds blow  
 And the long howling of the wolves  
 Is beard among the snow ;  
 When round the lonely cottage  
 Blows loud the tempest's din,  
 And the good logs of Algidus  
 Roar louder yet within;

When the oldest cask is opened,  
 And the largest lamp is lit ;  
 When the chestnuts glow in the embers,  
 And the kid turns on the spit;  
 When the young and old in circle  
 Around the firebrands close;  
 When the girls are weaving baskets,  
 And the boys are shaping bows ;

When the gudeman mends his armour,  
 And trims his helmet's plume ;  
 When the goodwife's shuttle merrily  
 Goes flashing through the loom,—  
 With weeping and with laughter  
 Still is the story told  
 How well Horatius kept the bridge  
 In the brave days of old.

## CHAPTER II.

1812—Duration of the War—Feeling in Canada. The War no Canadian quarrel. Value of Canada to England at that crisis. The feeling between the British and American people. British pretensions—Right of Search—Resisted by the Danes—The northern powers—The Americans. British dilemma. Blockade of 1806. Berlin and Milan Decrees. Orders in Council. Constructive Blockade. French and American inconsistency. Troubles of neutrals. Affair of the Leopard and Chesapeake, 1807. American exacerbation. British exclusion from American harbours. American gratitude to France. French sympathy in Canada a mistake. The Eastern States averse to the War. Affair of the President and Little Bells, 1811. Irritation increases. President of United States appeals to Congress. War declared 18th June, 1812. Futile attempt to capture British West India fleet. British disbelief in a war.

The war of 1812—so called in Canada—extended over three years, -1812, 1813, 1814. War was declared by Act of Congress of the United States on the 18th June, 1812. It was terminated by the provisions of the Treaty of Ghent, 24th December, 1814 ; which, however, was not ratified at Washington before February 7th, nor proclaimed in Canada until the 21st March, 1815.

Canada in 1812 cared as little, as at present, for a war with her powerful neighbor, but, as at present, cared not to evade it. The ploughshare and the broad-axe are her indigenous weapons, only to be exchanged at the call of honor, and of the public safety. Defence, not defiance, has been and ever will be her motto.

The war of 1812 was no Canadian quarrel. It was forced upon the Canadian people, and fought upon Canadian soil, to gratify the antipathies of two nations, too like to be loving. True it is, the British Canadians of the West did not belie their descent,

and shared, without stint, in the weakness and the strength of the British character ; nor can it be denied, that the French population of the East woke up to the fight with the gay and gallant spirit of their chivalrous forefathers. But the lot of both was to be betwixt the upper and the nether grindstone, and both faced the inevitable ordeal bravely and well.

Nor is it right to admit, as some have asserted and many have believed, that the assistance of England was purely gratuitous,—that the defence of Canada brought no compensation, that it was in fact an additional burthen at a burthensome crisis ; for it is beyond dispute, that the North American Provinces, and Canada especially, were indispensable to England at this period of the Great War in Europe. At the time that she was excluded from the ports of the Baltic, her best supplies of timber came from Canada, and the non-intercourse acts of the United States had thrown her, for this article, almost exclusively on the resources of the North American colonies. One of the strongest arguments for war in the Congress of the United States was that employed in 1811 by Mr. Porter, the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, in reference to the conquest of Canada. " These Provinces," said the speaker, " are not only immensely valuable, but almost indispensable to the existence of Great Britain, cut off, as she now is in a great measure, from the North of Europe. The exports from Quebec only, amounted during the last year to near six millions of dollars, in ship-timber, and provisions for support of her fleets and armies." Canada, in fact, made rich return for the expense of defending her, by the supplies afforded to the West India colonies, and to meet the home demand. The war with Napoleon proved the value of these colonies, and a war with Russia might show it again.

Little heed, however, did the men of those days give to questions of this sort. The only question between England and her

colony then, was one of mutual assistance. The men of the United States were shrewder calculators, but the feeling which ruled in the British heart was one of bitter irritation. The war, indeed, was, at the bottom, no quarrel between governments. The governments of the day were but the instruments of the time. The real cause of strife was to be found in the temper of the people. It was a personal " turn up " between Jonathan and John Bull.

Inter

Hectora Priamidem animosum atque inter Achillem  
Ira felt capitalis.

The animosity engendered between the British and American nations by the War of the Revolution had not been allayed by the peace of 1783. It had excoriated both parties. The people on both sides were dissatisfied with the results of the contest. Neither had had enough ; each had still an old grudge to settle ; the British were keen for a fight, the Americans were keener, and grasped at the first inviting opportunity.

From the day when Burke exclaimed against " the passion which many men in very humble life have taken in the American war, and in *our* subjects in America, *our* colonies, *our* dependencies," and denounced " the syren song of ambition which has charmed ears one would have thought were never organized to that sort of music,"\* to the close of that contest, the spirit of the British people was the same ; That spirit survived the contest. They could forgive the French Fontenoy and Steinkirk, they could exchange stern courtesy with Luxembourg or Marshal Saxe, for they had entertained with still greater courtesy captive French monarchs and marshals ; but they had no offset to the humiliations of the American War, nor to the victories of militia generals. They could not give in : their umpires had done so for them, but they were anxious for another round.

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\* Speech previous to the election, Bristol, 1780.

' Since the peace of 1783 the British and the Americans had divided between them the carrying trade of the world. They met in every harbour, and in every harbour came to blows. The words " Yankee " and " Britisher," with a sanguinary expletive, were constant terms of mutual reproach, and the popular voices of New York and Liverpool swelled the chorus with accompaniments not always the most soothing ;—the feeling between the people was very bad.

The Government of America shared largely in this ill feeling ;

The dog, to gain his private ends,  
Went mad, and bit the man.

The Government of England in all sincerity—hotly pressed and fighting against heavy odds elsewhere sought no additional quarrel with America. But it was borne down by the burden of its traditions. With the pertinacity of vigorous age, it clung to the assumptions of triumphant and overbearing boyhood. The maritime pretensions of England were, at this time, excessive. Forgetful of all but her naval strength and hereditary renown, she exacted concessions she would have scorned to grant, and to which no spirited nation, more especially one sprung from her own loins, could condescend to submit.

She insisted on the " Right of Search." First, to search neutral vessels for hostile property, whether " contraband of war " or not ; and secondly, and still more offensively, on the right to search neutral vessels—even the war-ships of peaceful nations—in quest of deserters. The Americans, on their part, contended that the flag covered the merchandise, that the deck of an American ship was a sanctuary, and that the pretension to search for deserters was a profanation and an outrage.

In the haughty spirit of their Norse forefathers, the Vikings of England had, for centuries, exacted from all nations obedience in

the " narrow seas." The power to compel, whether it was to " dip a flag " or, to give up a deserter, continued to be arrogated and exercised. But in time, other men arose who resisted the imposition. In 1799 the Danish frigate *Haufenau* had contested the attempt to search neutral vessels under convoy, and the Danish Minister, Count Bernstorff, had replied to the angry remonstrance of England, that " the captain of the Danish king's frigate, by repelling a violence which he had no right to expect, had done no more than his duty ;" and in the summer of 1800 the *Freya*, another Danish frigate, fought most gallantly in support of the independence of her national flag, and, having lost two men killed and five wounded, struck her colors, and was carried into the Downs.\*

To these pretensions, followed by such acts, is to be ascribed the combination of the Northern powers—Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia—in 1800, to secure, as it was termed, " the liberty of the seas," so that neutral ships should freely navigate the coasts of belligerent powers—that everything but what was expressly contraband should be held to be free—that the declaration of officers commanding ships of war should free the cargoes of their convoys,—and that no search should be allowed." There can be little doubt but that the popular irritation upon such subjects greatly strengthened the hands of Napoleon in his subsequent occupation of the Scandinavian kingdoms. In the year 1800, when the American envoys, Messrs. Elsworth, Henry, and Murray, took leave of the Consular Government of France, they were entertained at a banquet, where the Consul Lebrun proposed the significant toast, " To the union of America with the power of the North, that respect may be procured for the liberty of the seas." f

As the refusal to recognize these " new regulations," as they

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\* Gifford's History of the War of the French Revolution, Vol. I, p. 296.  
Ibidem;

were termed, was the ostensible cause of the war of 1812, it may be permitted here to inquire a little further.

The innate justice of England had been early aroused to a sense of the unreasonableness of these pretensions. The Government of England was prepared to abate this annoyance by treaty stipulations. Indeed, in 1806, negotiations to this effect were actually closed by a treaty between England and America, which Mr. Jefferson, for reasons best known to himself, refused to ratify ; the practice therefore, objectionable as it was, reverted to the *statu quo ante*. The principles then contended for, are fully recognized now. They have been accepted and acted upon by all civilized nations for half a century. The first nation to violate them has been the Amer'i'cans themselves, in the late notable exploit of the irrepressible Wilkes.

And it should be kept in mind, that, at this critical period, England was involved in a gigantic contest. Almost single-handed, she had for years resisted the combined powers of Europe, grasped and wielded by the most extraordinary genius of modern times. Every means and device of war had been employed and exhausted in this stupendous struggle. This was no time for concessions which could only strengthen her adversaries. **Indeed**, as war measures alone, the measures taken would have been justifiable.

In May, 1806, Mr. Fox, then leader of the British Government, had declared the coasts of France and Holland, from Brest to the Elbe, to be in a state of blockade, and enforced the declaration by the exhibition of 160 ships of war; under Lord Keith, in the Channel and on the North Sea.

In November 1806, and in November 1807, Napoleon, by Decrees dated from Berlin and Milan respectively, retaliated. He declared the whole British Islands to be in a state of blockade, authorized the seizure of any vessel, of any nation, bound to Britain, and confiscated British goods, whether contraband of war or not, found

sailing under any flag. England again retorted by further Orders in Council, November, 1807, declaring all countries under the power of France to be blockaded, whether *actually blockaded or not*; and that all products of countries so *constructively* blockaded, being taken, in the bottoms or ships of any nation, should be held to be good prize.

Constructive blockade was an innovation in the enginery of war. It was blockading run mad. The right to blockade an enemy's ports in time of actual warfare had been perfectly understood, so long as the blockade was effectual and complete ; but the blockade declared by England was of countries, not specific ports, and was declared to exist, whgther such countries were actually blockaded or not. England justified her course by contending that, as mistress of the seas, having one thousand ships of war afloat, she practically blockaded the whole world. We will not pause to discuss this process of reasoning ; but if fallacious and unjust on the part of England, how should it be designated on the part of Napoleon, who, " without a single ship of the line, and only a few smaller vessels capable of putting to sea, declared the whole British Empire in a state of blockade" ?\*

It is also right to notice, that, by the French treaty of Mortefontaine, to which the Americans were parties in the year 1800, the Maritime code, promulgated by Napoleon himself, had stipulated with ostentatious liberality that " the flag should cover the merchandise." Thus while England, by her Orders in Council, adhered reluctantly and *ex necessitate rei* to obsolete traditions, France, who, with great trumpeting, had abandoned all right, by her Decrees deliberately violated her own treaty stipulations to suit a present purpose. Moreover, it was felt in England, and felt sorely, that while she was fighting the battle of constitutional freedom against

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\* Alison., Am. ed., Vol. IV, p. 453.

stark despotism, and was compelled to have recourse to expedients she would otherwise have been willing to waive, free America sympathized and sided with the French Emperor, that

What in the corporal was but a choleric word,  
Was in the soldier a flat blasphemy.

It must be admitted, at once, that the neutral was sorely tried. Well might he exclaim, under the conflicting circumstances, " a plague on both your houses." He was bandied between the disputants after a fashion equally fatal to trade and temper ; and had he turned with equal spirit on both tormentors, little blame would he have had. During this absorbing and protracted contest, wherein every French and every British seaman—by press-gang or conscription—had been claimed for the service of his country, the Americans, safe in their neutrality, had, by degrees, almost monopolized the carrying trade of the world ; An enormous commerce had grown up, upon which the British Order in Council and the French Decree fell with ruinous force ; and from the nature of things, the gripe of the Briton outreached and outmeasured the stroke of the Gaul. The cruisers of England swarmed on every sea ; American vessels, bound to French ports, or to, or from, ports of countries tributary to France, were captured by scores ; while the merchantman bound to Britain or her Colonies, was safe except from some occasional French frigate or skulking privateer. "While this state of things existed, the bill of damages incurred on French account, was largely against England; but at the same time, had a kindlier or more kindred spirit prevailed in America, it would have been seen, that the interruption of the trade with France was amply compensated by an immense and more profitable trade with Great Britain, and the memory of a generous forbearance would have been productive of fruit to unborn generations.

But, upon the old rankling was piled this new agony; and *in*

1807, June 22, occurred an incident which greatly exasperated the pre-existing bad feeling. The right of search was rudely tested. The *Leopard*, a British 74-gun ship, acting under orders from the Admiral of the North American station, overhauled in American waters, the American frigate *Chesapeake*, and demanded the surrender of certain alleged deserters. The demand was refused, and the refusal was answered by a broadside, to which the *Chesapeake* replied, but, inferior in strength, struck her colors, having lost three men killed and eighteen wounded, among the latter the commander, Commodore Barron. The deserters were arrested and removed, taken to Halifax and tried, and one, convicted of piracy and mutiny, was hanged.

This act was an outrage—a high-handed act of that school of Tritons in which Commodore Wilkes of the U. S. N. subsequently graduated ; but before one word of remonstrance or complaint could reach the British Government, this act of aggression was disavowed. Captain Humphreys, commanding the *Leopard*, though acting under orders, was recalled. Admiral Humphreys was superseded, and every possible reparation made and offered. It was declared " that the right of search when applied to vessels of war, extended only to a *requisition*, and could not be carried into effect by force."

But the wrath of America was unappeasable—the blow, the irreparable and unpardonable blow had been struck. It was the natural instinct of a young and brave people. On subjects such as these the British were comparatively easy,—their national character was made, but the Americans—a new nation—had a national character to make. They were, therefore, on this occasion, " all feeling and raw life," and brought the brave Commodore Barron to a court-martial for not resisting further, where no good was to be gained or honor won.

The resentment of the American Government was hot and hasty.

Before asking, and without awaiting, reparation, the President issued a Proclamation excluding from the harbors of the United States His Britannic Majesty's ships. As the fleets of France continued to enjoy access to these ports, this act was, at once, hostile to the former and friendly to the latter country. If England had resented the capture of the Trent with similar virulence, the Tuscarora would never have blockaded the Sumpter, for weeks, in Southampton water. But Jefferson, the representative of the democratic principle in American politics, was President of the United States. He and his party betrayed on this occasion, and on many more, strong hatred to England, and marked favoritism towards France. It is undeniable that the American people owed a deep debt of gratitude to France. Lafayette and Rochambeau and De Grasse aided, and more than aided, to achieve the independence of America. America owed to France a grateful return, and exhibited her gratitude by suffering much, and saying little. The democratic party, eager to humble Britain, accepted any humiliation rather than quarrel with France. They submitted to the capture of ships in neutral ports, the sequestration of cargoes, the ransom of merchandise, with a faint remonstrance. French war ships seized American merchantmen at sea, plundered and burnt them,—an example which has been feebly imitated by the notorious Alabama of the present day. They consoled themselves with the belief that the anticipated triumph of the French Emperor in Europe, would ensure their supremacy on this continent. They were prepared to divide the world between them. With this view they accepted wrong from France, and heaped wrong on England. England's difficulty had become America's opportunity. In the words of the historian Alison, " the ostensible object of the war was to establish the principle that the flag covers the merchandise, and that the right of search for seamen who have deserted, is inadmissible ; the real object was to wrest from Great

Britain the Canadas, and, in conjunction with Napoleon, extinguish its maritime and Colonial Empire."

Politicians, too, of this early American school, had a notion that French connection and the conquest of Canada were synonymous terms. This was a great mistake, as was found out, some short time after, on the battlefield of Chateauguay ; but from the first, it had an unexpected good effect, for the very suggestion of a French policy or the exercise of French influence, tested the British feeling still latent in the hearts of thousands of Americans. In the New England States, a war with England was denounced, which, without any just grounds, destroyed their trade and paralyzed their industry. Citizens of these States expressed an abhorrence of France, and of its rule, and protested against the contemplated introduction of French troops on this continent, which, under the pretext of subduing or seducing the French Canadians, might prove to be subversive of their own liberties.

It is probable, that to this worthy spirit of truthful independence, may be ascribed the fact, that during the whole of the ensuing war, the immense extent of frontier between Lower Canada and the States of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, was unassailed by an enemy. It is well worthy of reflection that, during the whole war of 1812 no hostile irruption was attempted upon the Province, from Lake Champlain to the ocean. The facilities were as great and the temptation as strong, as when the impetuous Arnold forced a passage to Quebec down the valley of the Chaudiere. This feat, executed in 1775, in the depth of a Canadian winter, athwart a howling wilderness, offered an incentive and an example, which could only have been counteracted by the sober good sense and right feeling of the people of the Eastern States in 1812.

Amid these diversities

There is much wisdom to be taught and learnt.

At this period of universal ferment, when decrees, orders in

council, proclamations, non-importation and non-intercourse acts, embargos and imbroglios, with their mystical jargon, puzzled, scared and exasperated half mankind, when America rejected British manufactures, and prohibited the exportation of cotton and corn, when the artisans and operatives of England were half crazed with famine,—occurred another untoward event, which exhibited in the brightest light that noble forbearance which is to this day the proud inheritance of a fearless people.

On the 16th May, 1811, the British sloop of war Little Belt, of 18 guns, commanded by Captain Bingham, was pursued off Cape Charles by the American 44-gun frigate President. America was at peace with the whole world. Commodore Rogers had nothing to fear, and had nothing to ask, of a foreign war-ship of any nation, of such inferior force. On American principles, he had no right to overhaul or search. He did overhaul, and hailed ; and declared that he was answered by a shot, which led to a determined fight of three quarters of an hour between the ponderous American and his pigmy antagonist. The Little Belt was shot to pieces. Commodore Rogers, on learning the name of his adversary, politely regretted the mistake, and offered help. Bingham demurred to the mistake, and declined assistance. He could help himself, and so he did, and brought his small ship in a sinking state into Halifax, with eleven men killed and twenty-two wounded. This officer averred, with much reason, that his orders prohibited, and common sense forbade the collision he was said to have provoked. The statements on both sides were conflicting ; we are left to draw a reasonable inference from the facts. Rogers was tried by court martial, and acquitted amid much national exultation. The American government disavowed hostile instruction, and the British Government acquiesced in the *amende*, and made no remark.

This offering of the cheek to the smiter does not seem to have been appreciated. It very rarely is. The forbearance of England

was honest, unselfish, self-denying, but it was entirely misconstrued. Neither reparation, as in the case of the Chesapeake, nor patience, as in that of the Little Belt, could induce a corresponding spirit. The temper of America had festered into rancor. The feeling of the governing masses was not ill-expressed in the lines of Martial :

Non amo te, Sabidi, nee possum dicere quare,  
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te.

In November, 1811, the President officially appealed to arms. Congress eagerly responded by large votes of men and money. During the winter, warlike armaments were made ; in the spring, fresh votes of money and men. At length, and at this juncture, when the Emperor Napoleon, at tile head of the largest army the world had seen, was pressing on triumphantly to the boasted subjugation of all the Russias, and Wellington, squabbling with Camarillas and Juntos, was preparing, in silence and apparent discomfiture, for a renewal of the struggle in Spain, the United States declared war against Great Britain; nor did they waver when they learned, a few weeks after, that the obnoxious order in Council, so bitterly resented, had at the time of the declaration of war been actually repealed. War was declared on the 18th of Julie, 1812, by Act of Congress. Mr. Madison, then President, who had done all in his power to exasperate existing **and to lash the popular** mind to frenzy, eluded the responsibility of the fatal act, and made a catspaw of the legislature.

" Coming events cast their shadows before," particularly to those who can shape events to suit their own purposes. The declaration of war was preceded by an embargo imposed in April, 1812, devised shrewdly, to intercept all sources of transatlantic information with England, and to give to the spoiler her homeward bound West India fleet. It was well known that this rich prize would be on the Atlantic in May or June, unsuspecting and insufficiently protected. By closing their ports, the Americans cut off all communication between the

countries, and caused great loss to their own and British commerce, but secured, thereby, all the sailors of the impounded ships, of their own marine, and of other countries also, for future national service on the ocean and the lakes. Instructions must have been given to the American navy long before the declaration of war, for, on the 18th June, the day on which war was declared at Washington, Commodore Rogers—red with the blood of Cock Robin—backed by a stout squadron of three frigates and two sloops, gave chase to the West India fleet, convoyed by the frigate *Belvidera*, which gallantly rescued every merchantman, and saved herself. Thus failed this cute speculation on the argosies of England, and the cotemporaneous invasion of Canada fared no better.

The people and the authorities of Canada had for long been alive to the imminence of a war. Standing on the brink of the crater they could see the daily progress of the red and angry torrent, destined at any moment to boil over and ravage their own quiet homes. A cry for support and assistance, rather than protection, had long before gone forth, and was met, as it appeared to them, by an inconceivable apathy. The rulers of England believed, or forced themselves to believe, that the United States would never quarrel with their own kith and kin, and their best friend and customer, in unnatural alliance with the despot of Europe. They relied on the right feeling, the shrewd and practical sense, and on the commercial interests—both of North and South—of democrat and federalist. The people of England, rallying from a staggering blow, looked only to their front, regardless of the assailant in the rear. They were, at this moment, fighting for dear life with a gigantic and remorseless foe. " Three days after the American declaration of war, Wellington crossed the Agueda to commence the Salamanca campaign. Six days after, Napoleon passed the Niemen on his way to Moscow, at the head of 880,000 men" \*

\* Alison, Vol. IV, ch. 76.

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### CHAPTER III.

State of Canada at the outbreak of the war. Military force—Attitude of the people. Avatar of Brock—His character and early career—Letter from Montreal, 1808—Takes command of troops in Upper Canada, 1810—Becomes Lieutenant-Governor, 1811. Hull invades Canada, 12th July. Proclamation—Brock's reply—Meets Parliament. Spirit of the country. United Empire Loyalists. Proctor at Amherstburg, 4th August—Detaches Tecumseh—Defeats Van Horne. On 7th August, Hull retires from Canada. Affair at Magagua. Capture of Michilimacinac, by Capt. Roberts and Toussaint Pothier. Brock with York Volunteers reaches Amherstburg. Interview with Tecumseh. Capture of Detroit, 16th August, 1812.

At the outbreak of the war, Canada was in fact in a defenceless condition. To man the fortresses of Quebec and Kingston, and to cover a frontier of 1,700 miles in length, the whole available force consisted of 4,450 regulars of all arms. In the Upper Province, which presents a water frontier of 1,300 miles, there were but 1,450 soldiers, or about two men and a fraction per mile, without counting garrisons. Sir George Prevost, whose qualifications partook more of a civil than of a military character, governed the country, and commanded in chief. The militia consisted of about 2,000 men in the Lower Province, and perhaps 1,800 in the Upper, not all called out, unarmed and undisciplined, and possessing little of the appearance or of the quality of soldiers, except pluck.

It may well be imagined, and admitted without disparagement to any, that, in the absence of all fitting preparation, the tocsin of war bore upon its echoes dismay to many hearts. The preparations of the enemy had been long made and ostentatiously paraded. Doubtless their extent had been exaggerated, but still they were