

perhaps, seditiously reviewed. He seized on the newspaper, and sent the editor to gaol. This might have been the usual practice at Cape Town or Madras, at Gibraltar or Messina, but it was not suited to the climate or constitution of Canada. These acts brought him in direct antagonism with a majority in the assembly, which 'being French Canadian, fastened upon him at once the imputation of hostility to the Canadian people. This, no unusual *ruse* in politics, was nothing but a *ruse*. As Sir James said, with much pathos, "For what should I oppress you? Is it from ambition? What can you give me? Is it for power? Alas! my good friends, with a life ebbing not slowly to its period, under pressure of disease acquired in the service of my country, I look only to pass what it may please God to suffer to remain of it, in the comfort of retirement among my friends. I remain among you only in obedience to the commands of my King."* The fact is, that he was an honest, earnest man; but too much of a martinet to be a useful civil governor. He returned home and died.

Sir George Prevost was made of more malleable material; and happily so, for the country and for the empire. Not all the power of England could, of itself, at that conjuncture have saved Canada, had not Canada been true to England and to herself. The preservation of the country depended on the support of the legislature, and on the good will of the masses. He identified himself with the masses; and, at a most critical moment, secured their cordial co-operation. The acts of the legislature—their ready contributions to the conduct of the war, bear witness to his success as a civil administrator. He was politic as well as just. But under a form of government which rules by parties, he could not please both, and in his turn he incurred an hostility which was neither blind to his faults nor kind to his errors. There can be no stronger

* Morgan, *Celeb. Can.*, p. 160.

proof of the influence he exercised and of the earnest loyalty of the people than the liberality of the Legislature. At this time it was all important to provide a currency as a substitute for gold, which, if put in circulation, would have found its way rapidly to a better market in the United States. It was desirable to be prepared with an expedient to counteract an accidental dearth of gold. Banks, and Bank notes were unknown in Canada. To many of the inhabitants a paper currency was unintelligible—to some obnoxious,—the recollections of the paper currency of French rule—the *ordonnances* or assignats of Bigot and his compeers were yet rife. In the face of these popular prejudices the Legislature legalized the issue of a paper currency. They authorized the issue of what was termed an Army Bill, analogous to the Exchequer Bill in England. It was a bank note bearing interest. These notes were made a legal tender. They were more than legalized, they were popularized by the example of the Legislature. The issue amounted to \$2,000,000. The Legislature provided for the expense of the operation and the temporary payment of interest. These Bills were redeemed 133T the Imperial treasury at the end of the war, but the action of the Legislature of Lower Canada at this critical time was declaratory of confidence in British rule and of a 'determination to uphold it.

* In 1658 the people of Canada were informed that the Royal Treasury of France was in no condition to repay the advances the Canadians had made to the Government. That the payment of Colonial Bills drawn upon it was suspended for a time. Vaudreuil and Bigot were apprized of this measure by an official circular. * * • This news startled those concerned, like a thunderbolt; there was owing by France to the Colonists more than 40 millions of francs (say 11,600,000 stg.) and there was scarcely one of them who was not a creditor of the State. "The paper money amongst us" wrote M. de Levis to the Minister "is entirely discredited and the people are in despair about it. They have sacrificed their all for the conservation of Canada to France; now they find themselves ruined, resourceless, but we do our best to restore their confidence." --Garneau, *History of Canada*, Vol. II, p 68.

If Great Britain had failed in the contest, the Legislative endorsers of these notes would have been responsible for the paper.*

The example of the Legislature was worthily sustained by the exhortations of the Catholic clergy. In no Catholic country in christendom does the clergy exercise a stronger or more healthy influence than in Canada. They *are* the domestic chaplains of every farm-house. In devotion and loyalty to the British Crown they are second to none. It has been shown on all occasions which justified their interposition. In 1775 Sir Guy Carlton declared publicly, that if the Province of Canada had been preserved to Great Britain, it was owing to the Catholic clergy.

In 1812 the Catholic church in Canada was under the guidance of the Rev. Joseph Octave Plessis, Bishop of Quebec. This able Ecclesiastic was contemporary with the treaty which ceded Canada to England. He was a native of Montreal, born in 1763. He became Bishop of Quebec in 1806. His services, in the protection of his church, and in the promotion of the best interests of his people, were most honourable ; but, among them all, none do greater credit to his heart and head than his constant adherence to the British Crown.

• Exchequer Bills—Macaulay explains what they were. "Another and at that conjuncture, a more effectual substitute for a metallic currency owed its existence to the ingenuity of Charles Montague. He had succeeded in engrafting on Harley's Land Bank Bill, a clause which empowered the government to issue negotiable paper bearing interest at the rate of three-pence a day on a hundred pounds. In the midst of the general distress and confusion appeared the first Exchequer Bills, drawn for various amounts from a hundred pounds down to five pounds. These instruments were rapidly distributed over the kingdom by post, and were everywhere welcome. The Jacobites talked violently against them in every Coffee House and wrote much detestable verse against them, but to little purpose. The success of the plan was such that the Ministers at one time resolved to issue twenty shilling Bills for the payment of the troops. But it does not appear that their resolution was carried into effect. History of England, vol. iv, p. 608.

Nor was the Prelate a blind or an unreasoning adherent. He gave good ground for the faith that was in him. " In considering the system of vexatious tricks organized against the church and people of Canada, by chiefs and subordinates who were sent from the Court of Louis the XV., at that time under the sceptre of Madame de Pompadour, he admitted, frankly, that under the English Government the Catholic clergy and rural population enjoyed more liberty than was accorded to them before the conquest ;" and after having praised the English nation, " which had welcomed so generously the French Ecclesiastics, hunted out of France by the Republicans of 1792," he added, " that the capitulation, as well as the treaty of 1763, were so many new ties of attachment to Great Britain, and that religion itself would gain by the change of domination."

It was **in** the spirit of this manly avowal, that he issued his *matt-dement* or episcopal proclamation, read in every church in his diocese, and concluded in the following eloquent language : " *auerriera*," said he, " it is to you that belongs the task of opposing yourselves, like a wall, to the approach of the enemy. They will cease to be formidable when the God of battles fights on your side ; under his holy protection, march to combat as to victory : sustain that reputation for obedience, for discipline, for valour and for intrepidity by which you deserved your first success. Your confidence will not be vain, if **in** exposing your lives for the defence of your country and your hearths, you take care before all things to make your peace with God."

These sentiments of the Bishop were enforced by his clergy with a quiet undemonstrative earnestness, which is energy, without the pretence it often assumes. It pervaded, encouraged, emboldened

• Life of Mongrandeur Plessis, by L'Abb4 Ferland. Translated by D. B. French, p. 14. Vide *ibid.*, p. 23.

t The expression of Stonewall Jackson was here anticipated.

all men. A remarkable incident, hereafter, on the battle-field of Chateauguay will exemplify its influence.*

Sir George Prevost applied, vigorously, the resources at his command to the protection of his threatened frontier. He had, at this time, cantoned in the districts of Montreal, Laprairie, St. John's, and Chambly, about 3,000 men ; two-thirds of which were Voltigeurs and embodied militia. It is curious to observe the varying characteristics of the races, in the terms of service most acceptable to each. The French Canadian preferred to be a conscript ; the Anglo-Canadian insisted upon being a volunteer

"Human story reproduces itself. Let us take the testimony of Burke, given twenty years before. " When the English nation seemed to be dangerously, if not irrevocably divided—when one, and that the most growing branch, was torn from the parent stock, and ingrafted on the power of France, a great terror fell upon this kingdom. On a sudden we awakened from our dreams of conquest, and saw ourselves threatened with an immediate invasion, which we were, at that time, very ill-prepared to resist. You remember the cloud that gloomed over us all. In that hour of our dismay, from the bottom of the hiding-places into which the indiscriminate rigour of our statutes had driven them, came out the body of the Roman Catholics. They appeared before the steps of a tottering throne with one of the most sober, measured, steady and dutiful addresses that was ever presented to the Crown. It was no holiday ceremony, no anniversary compliment of parade and show. It was signed by almost every gentleman of that persuasion, of note or property in England. At such a crisis nothing but a decided resolution to stand or fall with their country, could have dictated such an address ; the direct tendency of which was to cut off all retreat, and to render them peculiarly obnoxious to an invader of their own communion. The Address showed what I had long languished to see, that all subjects of England had cast off all foreign views and connections, and that every man looked for his relief from every grievance at the hands only of his own national government.—Burke, Speech before the Bristol Election, Sept., 1784.

f It was the boast of the soldiers, as we find it recorded in their solemn resolutions, that they had not been forced into the service, nor had enlisted chiefly for the sake of lucre ; that they were no janzaries, but free-born Eng-

Both Briton and Gaul made good soldiers in the field ; but the one stood on his independence, and accepted bounty-money; the other eschewed soldiering *en amateur*, yet cheerfully obeyed the draft. Both acted in accordance with their traditions. Since the days of Cromwell, the Englishman has been free to fight for whom he pleases. He enlists for reasons best known to himself ; and " takes the shilling," because he chooses. The Frenchman has been a feudal follower of his lord and of his king from his earliest to his latest history. The terms of his tenure in Canada revived a system not then extinct in France, and perpetuated habits of thought and action derived from his ancestors. He obeyed with the same devotion with which he would have followed a Montmorenci or a Condé ; and with an inborn recollection of the discipline of Royal Roussillon or Guienne. It was necessary to devise and adapt a system suited to the genius of both races of the population ; and Sir George Prevost did so.

In no part of Canada have the two peoples so much amalgamated as in the district of Montreal. It would be more correct, perhaps, to say assimilated : each race still retains its distinctive features ;

Each gives to each a double charm,
Like pearls upon the Ethiop's arm.

But commerce and constitutional government have exercised their influence ; and we see that tendency to a union of the Norman and Saxon elements which, in the course of ages, has made England what she is. On this occasion, as ever since, in questions of national defence, a generous rivalry animated both races. The Frenchman bore no love to the puritanical " Bostonnais," whose previous visits were not held in pleasant recollection. The Englishman rankled **in** the face of a nation which heaps upon him and his

lishmen, who had; of their own accord, put their lives in jeopardy for the liberties and religion of England, and whose right and duty it was to watch over the welfare of the nation which they had saved.—Macaulay, Vol. II, p. 94.

country, contumely and vituperation. Hard words may break no bones, but they offer a poor salve to old sores. Thus, with the cordial aid of an united population, Sir George made vigorous arrangements for the defence of this frontier.*

About ten miles below the outlet of Lake Champlain, barring the channel of the Richelieu, stands the military post of Isle aux Noix — now a fortress, then a swampy island, protected by rude breastworks and a wooden block-house. In 1812, when the only means of communication was by water, Isle aux Noix was regarded as a bulwark of the frontier. The country on each side of this fortalice was, for many miles, an impenetrable forest. It is now cleared and cultivated ; traversed by roads, and seamed with railways. In those days it was regarded as the portal of the district. Here was stationed a small regular garrison. Here, not long before, Sir James Craig had caused to be conveyed three gun-boats, built at Quebec. In the summer of 1813 the garrison consisted of detachments of the 13th and 100th regiments, and a small party of artillery, under command of Major Taylor, of the 100th.f

The Americans, shortly after the commencement of the war, had, on their part, built and equip* a small flotilla, to watch the entrance to the lake, and protect its waters from insult. This object is now secured by a strong but small work, called Fort Montgomery,, which, on the verge of the frontier, and at the margin of the river, preys the British from getting out, as effectually as Isle aux Noix prevents the Americans from getting in. It may be questionable if, in the event of a war, either work would, under the present

* In September was embodied another battalion of militia, called the *Fifth* Battalion, afterwards Canadian Chasseurs ; while the merchants and traders of the 1st Montreal Sedentary Militia organized themselves into four companies of volunteers for garrison duty, and field service in case of emergency.—*Christie*, Vol. II, p. 41.

James, Vol. II, p. 239.

circumstances of the frontier and conditions of warfare, prove aught else than a mere man-trap, in which soldiers are confined alive, to be disposed of at leisure. A few scows filled with stones and sunk in the muddy channel, would probably answer the purpose, at a less expenditure of men and money.

Little apprehension was entertained at Isle aux Noix of an attack from the lake, when at day-break on the morning of the 1st June, a sentry on the southern rampart discovered trucks, and streamers, and the masts of tall vessels rising above the mists, which at early morn, and at that season of the year, settle down upon the marshy banks of the river. The alarm was given—the garrison was roused—the gun-boats manned, and got under weigh; and, feeling their way through the fog, came upon two armed sloops, of from 90 to 100 tons each, armed each with 10 guns—eighteen-pounder carronades and long sixes ; and each mounting on a pivot an eighteen-pounder Columbiad. The object of the incursion was never made intelligible. It was venturesome, but indiscreet. Without the co-operation of a land force nothing could have been effected. The armed vessels could only have approached the works to their own assured destruction. From the nature of the channel they could not bring their broadside guns to bear: following in file, the fire of the one impeded the fire of the other. As it was, the gun-boats had them at their mercy, and raked both. Major Taylor, perceiving his advantage, landed men from the boats and *batteaux*, and lining the bushes on either side of the stream, kept up a galling fire of musketry. After a contest of three hours and a half, they struck their colours ; and proved to be the Growler and Eagle, armed sloops, with a complement of fifty men each, and commanded by Captain Sidney Smith, late of the Chesapeake. The Growler was brought to the garrison in safety ; the Eagle was so mauled by her puny antagonists, that she was run ashore to save her from sinking, but was got off, afterwards, and repaired.

This unexpected attack and its results, exposed the hospitals, barracks, and stores in preparation on Lake Champlain for " Montreal service," and encouraged the British to attempt their destruction. Sir George Prevost, in a despatch to Brock, in July, 1812, had remarked most justly, that " our numbers would not justify offensive operations, unless calculated to strengthen a defensive attitude." There can be no doubt but that, at this moment, the best defence was to be found in disarming further attack.

Preparations were made accordingly. The prizes were re-equipped ; the three gun-boats put in the best order ; a flotilla of row-boats and *batteaux* provided for the conveyance of troops. But the movement was paralyzed for the want of mariners. Fortunately, there was then lying at Quebec H. M. brig of war, *Wasp*. Her gallant commander, Everard—Pring, his second—and their whole crew volunteered to man the vessels on Lake Champlain. The service was readily accepted—the men transported to their destination—and on the 29th of July, the expedition left Isle aux Noix for Lake Champlain. The military force consisted of detachments of the 13th, 100th, and 103rd regiments—about 1000 officers and men, under command of Lieutenant Colonels Williams, Taylor, and Smith. A small artillery force, under Captain Gordon, and a few embodied militia were added ; and the whole placed under Lieutenant Colonel John Murray, of the 100th, one of the most prominent officers of the war. On the following day the flotilla reached Plattsburg—landed—dispersed the militia under General Moore—and destroyed the barracks on the Saranac, which were preparing for the reception of 4,000 men.* They upset Pyke's encampment, burned the arsenal, hospital, store-houses ; and removed a large quantity of naval and military stores. Everard then stood across the lake to Burlington, in the *Growler*—now re-named the *Broke*—acdbmpanied by one gun-boat. He was close in on the 2nd August : found two

* Murray's Despatch, 3rd August, 1863.

sloops, one of 11 and the other of 13 guns, ready for sea ; and a third, somewhat larger, lying under protection of a battery of 10 guns, mounted on a high bank, while two floating batteries and field-pieces, on the shore, strengthened the position.* Everard captured and destroyed four vessels under the eyes of this very superior force, which he very wisely abstained from attacking. The barracks and stores of Swanton, on Missisquoi Bay, were destroyed, as were also the barracks, block stores, and buildings at Champlain town ; the contemplated mischief was frustrated for a time, and the expedition returned to Isle aux Noix. This irruption, which was essentially a military movement of great importance, was denounced by the American press as an outrage. The British were stigmatized as " faithless ruffians, unprincipled invaders."† They forget that on the following day was perpetrated the second descent by Commodore Chauncey on York, a place already plundered, half depopulated, and where there was, at the time, no military establishment.

This bold stroke, on the part of the British, disconcerted for the time the American project to invade Lower Canada by the most natural and accessible channel, and with the aid of a naval force ; and it now becomes necessary to explain the circumstances which had about this time much facilitated their naval preparations on the northern lakes. The Government of Washington had made the best use of adversity. Driven to bay upon the sea-board, they devoted their energies, their men, and material to their inland waters, and from a new stand of vantage dealt forth strenuous blows.

* Everard's Despatch, 3rd August, 1863.
† James, Vol. II, p. 244.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Stung by reverses the British Admiralty acted with vigour—Ships were equipped of a calibre to meet the Americans—Anteridans blockaded in their own harbours—Commerce destroyed, revenue ruined—Seanlen useless on the ocean, transferred to the Lakes—Naval engagements—Dominica and Decatur—Pelican and Argus—Boxer and Enterprize—Cruise of the President under Commodore Rodgers—Detroit frontier—Unpleasant vicissitudes—Story of the Frontier—Squire Reynolds—His narrative—Early state of the Detroit Frontier—Building of Fort Miami—Who paid for it—Surrender of Michigan Territory and Detroit to Americans under Jay's Treaty 1796—British war-vessels on the Upper Lakes allowed to rot—Brook's interview with the Indians—June 1812—First scalp taken by the American McCulloch—Indian exasperation—Resolution to retaliate—Declaration of war received 28th June, 1812—Capture of the Cayuga Packet by Lieut. Rolette.

We will, therefore, return to the ocean, which we left on the 1st June, after the successful issue of the contest between the Shannon **and** the Chesapeake. Long before this event occurred—early in the year—the British admiralty, stung into activity by previous reverses, had despatched, to the coast of America vessels of a class, and **in such** strength, as to sweep the sea of the American cruisers, and compel the best and bravest of their ships and officers to take refuge—in their own harbours. In Feb. 1813, **Sir John** Borlaser Warren, having established a vigilant blockade of the American coasts, intercepted their carrying and coasting trade, and ruined their commerce.* The public revenue sank from \$24,000,000 to \$8,000,000. The Bays of the Chesapeake and Delaware were scoured by Admiral Cockburn and a light squadron; great damage inflicted on naval stores and arsenals, and the towns on the coast **kept** in a continual state of harassment. A few comments which it is proposed to make on the occurrences of this naval campaign, and on the atrocities charged

against Cockburn and his crews, are postponed to a later and more opportune occasion in the course of this narrative. The effect of the blockade was to shut up the American frigates in the ports of the Atlantic, and to transfer their officers and crews to Lakes Champlain, Ontario, and Erie. Thus it was that Captain Sidney Smith, late of the Chesapeake, was found and captured at Isle aux Noix. Thus it was that Commodore Perry, on Lake Erie, and later still, Commodore Macdonough, on Lake Champlain, were enabled to do such good service to their country.

But, not to interrupt the even tenor of our inland way hereafter, it may be as well to note here a few remarkable events of maritime war which signaled the summer. On the 5th August, the *Dominica*, a British schooner of twelve guns, 67 men, and nine boys, was captured by the American privateer *Decatur*, Captain. Dominique Diron, mounting half the number of *guns*; but one, an 18-pounder, on a pivot, of more value than all the guns engaged, and supplied by a complement of 120 men. The American, confident in his numbers, carried the *Dominica* by boarding. The obstinacy of the contest is best shown by the list of casualties. The *Dominica* lost her captain, Lieutenant Barett, purser, two midshipmen, and thirteen men killed, and forty wounded. Out of a crew of seventy-six souls, fifty-seven were *hors de combat* before she surrendered.

On the 12th of the same month, the *Pelican*, a British eighteen gun brig, just in from a cruise, was despatched from Cork before she furl'd sails, to encounter an American war schooner, known to be committing depredations in St. George's Channel. She proved to be the *Argus*, of 20 guns. After a sharp action of forty-five minutes, the American was carried by boarding. Her captain, Allen, was killed in the action. The *Pelican* was the superior vessel of the two. She was heavier in tonnage, and threw a broadside 341bs. more than her adversary, but the *Argus* had the advantage in crew by about 20 men.