

spectator, an area of three miles, by one and a half. In mid-river lies the umbrageous island of St. Helen's—half park, half arsenal, glistening in the morning sun, like an emerald set in gold. The St. Lawrence, a mile and a half wide at the narrowest, extends east and west as far as the eye can reach, covered with ships fresh from the ocean, and by steamers numberless, leaving on the wind their murky trail. In mid-landscape, that architectural marvel, the Victoria Bridge, spans the river, in all its strength and beauty; and the ear can detect the roar of each passing train which rushes through its iron ribs. Beyond, the rail-tracks wind through a champaign country, settled for two centuries, where farm houses and farm buildings line the roads like streets, rich in population and rustic wealth ; while in the distance the twin mountains of Beloeil and Montarville, sites even more picturesque than their names, rise from the plain, *insulce* of beauty amid a sea of verdure. But the eye can hardly tear itself from the scene of cultivation close around. The slopes of the mountain, and the rich alluvial soil at its foot, are one entire garden. Villas and pleasure grounds cover the hill-side. A beautiful reservoir, cleft out of the rock, glitters in the sunlight, with all the formal beauty of a *paysage* by Watteau—the costumes and gay colours of the present day heightening the illusion—and imparts health and freshness to the city spread beneath. In the distant valleys, the agricultural skill of the English farmer combines with the minuteness and precision of the old French style of gardening to create a scene

Ever changing, ever new :  
 When will the landscape tire the view ?  
 The fountain's fall ; the river's flow ;  
 The woody valley, warm and low ;  
 The windy summit, wild and high—  
 Roughly reaching to the sky ;  
 The pleasant seat ; the ruined tower ;  
 The naked rock ; the shady bower ;

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The town—the village—dome—and farm :  
 Each gives to each a double charm—  
 Like pearls upon an Ethiop's arm.

But the spectator from the hill-top, or the frequenter of St. James Street, or of the Rue Notre Dame, must not suppose that in 1812 things were as they are now. Not for twenty-five years later, did a civic government provide for the wants of advancing civilization; not for twenty-five years, did gas-lights, or pavements, or hydrants exist. The long line of banks and stately edifices which now adorn St. James Street, rise from an abandoned graveyard, which in 1812, was bounded by the crumbling city defenses. Fortification Lane was the foot of the town wall ; Craig Street was the town ditch ; beyond, on the upland, were country houses and orchards. In 1812 the Rue Notre Dame, now flashing with plate-glass and piled stores of jewelry and brocade, was a narrow street of low, cozy Canadian houses, one story and a half high—the *sancta* of much genial grace and of unbounded hospitality. The nocturnal reveller—and there was a good deal of revelry in those days—who slipped off the disjointed stones, mis-called *trottoir*, plunged mid-leg in mud, in the palpable darkness, without hope of refuge in a street-railway car, or of help from a sleepy policeman. The modest old Catholic parish church, which in early days gave a Catholic welcome to the houseless Protestant congregations,\* stood lengthwise in front of the present

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\*The Hon. Samuel Gerrard, who at the age of ninety years, retained a vivid recollection of events coeval with the conquest, was wont to dwell with pleasure on the catholicity of the Catholic population and Priesthood of that time. Under the terms of the capitulation, if they had had any ill feeling to gratify, they might have been as exclusive as they pleased ; but obeying a noble inspiration they offered the use of their church to other Christian denominations, and it received all members of the Christian family, until other provision was made. The benevolent influence of their first impulse has descended to the present generation, and pervades a whole community. **There is not in**

noble church of Noire Danie—grand in design, though somewhat marred by a too great severity of style. Those splendid wharves, faced with miles of cut stone, unequalled in America, and rivalled only in Europe by the docks Petersburg, have replaced a nauseous bank, heaped with filth and garbage; and a muddy islet, the receptacle of drift-wood and drowned animals; and a turbid stream, from whence the strongest swimmer never rose. Montreal of the present day, with its palatial residences,—its places of public resort,—markets numerous, convenient and ornamental,—with its cathedrals, churches, colleges, and convents,—with its multiplied institutions and social improvements,—with a population of 100,000 souls, is as superior to the Montreal of 1840, as the Montreal of 1840 was in advance of 1812; and yet at that time Montreal was the commercial heart of Canada; the fountain of supply; the focus of mercantile energy and wealth; and was regarded as the grand end and aim—the promised prize of—American conquest.

It was then universall•believed in the United States that the fall of Montreal would entail the subjugation of Canada. This opinion may be questioned. Situated at the head of navigation from the ocean, and at the foot of all the channels of communication with the upper country, the temporary occupation of Montreal would doubtless have compelled all the western garrisons to fall back upon Kingston; but the force concentrated at the latter point, would have sufficed to keep at bay the American army then in the field, reduced, as it must have been, by detachments.

Christendom a community more devoid of the vices and bigotry of sectarianism than that of Montreal. It is not that men of different persuasions tolerate each other—they unite in kindly and cordial feeling, socially, and in all matters of public concern. In matters of faith all claim liberty of conscience; and, without derogating from their own opinions, respect the liberty they claim, by not interfering with th'ose of others.

And it may be doubted whether the army from Western Canada, descending the St. Lawrence, might not have invested the invader, in a false position, on the wrong side of a wide river—which they could not bridge, and British gun-boats would soon command. The possession of Montreal would, no doubt, facilitate an attack upon Quebec. It had offered this facility to Amherst, in 1759-60; and to Montgomery, in 1775-76. And yet Quebec would have never fallen but for Wolfe's triumphant daring. Montgomery failed. And **so long as the** climate in winter, and the British navy in summer, command **the St.** Lawrence, Quebec is safe.

Montreal was, indeed, in dangerous proximity **to** the American frontier, at a point where a large force could easily be placed within striking distance. Forty-five miles from Montreal, *ci vol d'oiseau*, is the line which divides the State of New York from Lower Canada. It is commonly known as the "Line Forty-five," being on that parallel of latitude, established by treaty as the frontier of the two countries. This line intersects the head of Lake Champlain at Rouse's Point, where the lake narrows to a river, which, assuming there the name of the Richelieu, passes through the most fertile district of French Canada, and disembogues into the **St.** Lawrence at Sorel. The territory fertilized by this river is rich as the Delta of the Nile. It is a wide alluvial flat. It was long regarded as the garden of Canada. It was seized upon, at once, with instinctive appreciation, and settled by the **first** French settlers of the country. The tourist, who will scale the top of Beloail, sees around him a striking panorama. **The** main roads **appear to** radiate from the foot of the mountain. The farms, on the old seigniorial system, are laid off, right and left of these roads, with **a front of three acres** by a depth of thirty. The farm-houses and buildings **on every** lot, for convenience **and mutual assistance in winter, front on the** road. These houses—red-roofed, delicately whitewashed, kept with remarkable

neatness—surrounded by gardens and foliage, and well arranged fields, chequer the whole country. For miles and miles extend these vistas of dwellings, with a village church, its steeple glittering in the sunlight, and a modest *presbytère* interpolated on the landscape, every three leagues. The character of the population is in keeping with the scene. The French Canadian is eminently a gregarious animal, attached to his *habitats*. He hopes to live and die within sound of the bell which rang at his baptism. He is attached to his fellows, to his institutions, his language, his religion; he is attached to his priesthood—who by their exemplary lives and their care, temporal as well as spiritual, deserve all his love. He is social and hospitable, courteous and courtly. The manners of the *vieille tour* are still to be found among the *habitants* of Canada, and invest the females of the race with an indescribable charm. But his attachment to the past makes him indifferent to the future. He is slow in improvement ; and in the great race of human progress is exposed to be left behind. And yet, those who have known these people for twenty years, can bear witness to an advance, which, although it might be accelerated to their advantage, promises much. Education has made great strides. That which was regarded as an imposition, is now esteemed a privilege. In the small towns and villages, and even in the farNhouses, is seen a manifest increase in the comforts, the conveniences, the elegancies, and luxuries of life ; and with them, an increased independence of character. Men think more for themselves, and are less easily led. Time was, when they were docile to a fault ; but upon occasions, they have shown all the *vivida vis* of a gentle nature. When roused they are stern to savageness.

The possessions of such a people were inviting to an invader—as the flesh-pots of Egypt. The government of the United States had, for long, honored this part of Canada with special attention. To Mr. Secretary Armstrong, Montreal was as the apple of his eye. It

was argued pertinently enough—Why waste men and money upon distant frontiers ? strike at the vitals, and paralyze the extremities. Capture Montreal, and you starve de Rottenburg and Proctor. In Montreal your troops will find winter quarters and English Christmas cheer. As the Cabool prince remarked at Calcutta, rubbing his hands with the leer of a freebooter—"A splendid place : ah, yes ! a splendid place to plunder." The fields on the Richelieu would forage and feed an army, more plentifully than the plains of the Low Countries.

These counsels carried with them great weight ; and it will be seen' that for the remainder of the campaign, the capture of Montreal was the grand end and crowning object of American strategy. In furtherance of this scheme the cabinet of Washington assembled a large force on Lake Champlain. This lake runs due north and south ; and divides the State of New York from the State of Vermont. It is in length 130 miles, by a width of from one to fifteen. It is one great link in the chain of communication between the city of New York and the banks of the St. Lawrence. The Champlain canal, which connects the southern extremity of the lake with the River Hudson, was not commenced until 1818 ; nor could the proverbial ingenuity of the race in its wildest imagination have conceived the, the network of American railroads which now converge on Rouse's Point. But, long before the introduction of the rail, the internal channels of communication had greatly improved. In 1812 the country between Albany and Whitehall, about 80 miles, was open and cultivated ; the roads the best in America ; the Hudson afforded 140 miles of uninterrupted navigation, and Lake Champlain supplied the rest.

What Loughrig tarn is among the lakelets of North Britain, such is Lake Champlain to the lakes of North America. It is a perfect gem. The coast scenery of Erie and Ontario is comparatively tame : though undulating, it is in general aspect flat—a rich alluvial

margin, acquired to the land in the course of ages, by the gradual retrogression of the water. But the coast of Lake Champlain rises rapidly into upland, backed on both shores by mountain peaks, which, if of no great altitude, are most beautiful in shape and grouping. The waters are pure and deep, and studded with lovely isles. The alternate coasts, never lost to view, are dotted over with villages, and homesteads, and farms ; and teem with flocks and herds, and elaborate cultivation. The cities of Burlington and Plattsburg adorn its shores ; and Ticonderoga and Crown Point, associated with tales of Indian stratagem, and of the old French wars, impart pictorial beauty and historical interest to the *Mrican*, immortalized by the pen of Cooper.

At the time when General Dearborn retired into winter quarters, in 1812, he had under his command, on Lake Champlain, an army of at least 12,000 men. This fine force was partially moved to Sackett's Harbor ; and frittered away in the spring in the raid upon York and the empty acquisition of Fort George, to the great dissatisfaction of the Government at Washington. But on the retirement of this officer, the commander in the field concurred with the cabinet. In the summer of 1813 about 6,000 men were collected at Burlington and Plattsburg; and extensive barracks were prepared for the reception of troops at these points—at Champlain in New York, and Swanton in Vermont. Commodore Macdonough, with a force of seamen from the seaboard, was actively engaged in fitting out a naval armament on the Lake. These preparations bespoke their object. The aspect of affairs on this frontier was very menacing.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Sir George Prevost and Sir James Craig—Sir James a good man but obdurate—Sir George politic and useful—He identifies himself with the people—They support him and British rule—The Legislature legalize the issue of army bills, and vote additional militia forces—Exchequer Bills—Sir George prepares for defence—English Volunteers.—French Militia—The two people incline to different systems of enrolment—Both readily unite against common enemy—Isle aux Noix—Attempt made to surprise this post—Capture of American schooners Growler and Eagle—Reprisals—Officers and men of H. M. brig of war, Wasp, transferred to Lake Champlain—Plattsburg, Swanton, Champlain, destroyed—Burlington challenged—Blockade of *the* seaboard by the British—Increased American strength on the Lakes.

Sir George Prevost, necessarily resident at Quebec, the seat of Government, retained the chief military command in Lower Canada. In 1811 he had succeeded in the government a man of great talent and energy—eminent for his services in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America ; but unsuccessful in Canada. Sir James Craig was an honest man and a brave soldier ; but he had governed soldiers all his life, and his ideas of government squared with the rules of discipline. He had none of the flexibility of character which constitutes a successful administrator under a constitutional system. He came at once into collision with the legislature. And in those days there was no responsible council to fend off the blow of the battering-ram. The assembly humbly prayed to be allowed to defray the expenses of the civil list. The prayer had doubtless a double object : the privilege to pay inferred a right to discharge and the alternative was ominous to some of Sir James' advisors. But the request was reasonable ; and Sir James was wrong in refusing to lay it **at** the foot of the throne. His acts were maliciously, and