

From Blackwood's Magazine

THE PROGRESS OF THE NEW DOMINION.

"I hear the tread of pioneers
Of nations yet to be,
The first low wash of human waves,
Where soon shall roll a sea."

—WHITTIER.

It was an eminent American statesman and orator, Daniel Webster, who gave expression to the finest image that was probably ever conceived of the power of England as shown by the extent of her colonial possessions. Whilst standing on the heights of the old city of Quebec at an early hour of a summer day, he heard the drum-beat which called the soldiers to their duty, and instantaneously there flashed across his mind an idea which he clothed in eloquent words on a subsequent occasion, when he wished to impress an audience with the greatness of the British empire. The place where he stood on that summer morning was associated with many memories peculiarly interesting to an American statesman. The old gates and walls of the fortifications recalled the days of Frontenac and other French viceroys, who were continually threatening the peace of the New England settlements. The quaint architecture of the houses, and the narrow streets running up and down the hills, were so many memorials of the French *régime* which had vanished with the victory on the plains of Abraham, whose green meadows might even be seen from where the American was standing. The black-robed priests, the sisters and nuns in their peculiar garments of sombre hue, hastening to the antique churches and convents, were all characteristic of a town in Normandy or Brittany, rather than of an American city on the banks of one of the great highways of the Western

continent. He might for an instant have thought himself in a town of old France; but he was soon aroused from his reverie as he heard the beat of the morning drum, and saw the flag run up the staff on the citadel which crowns those historic heights. At such a moment, amid such a scene, he might well think of the vastness of the empire of England, even without the possession of the old American colonies. His prescient mind could see in the great north-land, of which Quebec was but the gateway, the rudiments of States as flourishing and prosperous as the American commonwealth, of which he was one of the most illustrious citizens. The ships in the harbour below, so many representatives of the maritime nations, were among the evidences of the growing commerce of half a continent still under the dominion of England. Half a million of French Canadians, even at that day, were dwelling by the side of the St. Lawrence and its tributary rivers; whilst away beyond the borders of the French province, stretched a vast territory, already occupied by a thrifty, energetic class of British settlers. As the *reveille* awoke the echoes of the heights, even the American statesman, proud of his own country, and confident of its future, was forced to acknowledge the greatness of a Power "which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts; whose morning drum-beat, following the sun and keeping company with the hours,

*The London Times reviewed this paper
"as the best that has for a long time
appeared on Canada."*