

accepted by our forefathers as a good step in the right direction. That Act was granted in spite of the opposition of some fanatics and of some speculators, and the very next year our forefathers had occasion to prove their gratitude to England and their loyalty to the new flag. The Americans invaded the country, and it was owing to the efforts, to the chivalry, to the valour of the French Canadian people, powerfully aided, of course, by the few English troops that were here, that Canada was retained as a possession of the Crown of England, in 1775. As my words alone may not be of sufficient authority, I will quote from Biggar, in his work, "Canada—a Memorial Volume," at page 27, where he says:—

"While there was, as a matter of course, a good deal of friction between the new subjects, as the French were called, and the British settlers or 'old subjects,' under the temperate and judicious guidance of General Murray and Sir Guy Carleton, matters proceeded hopefully and the country entered upon a career of prosperity, rapidly increasing in population and wealth."

At page 28 he says:—

"The colonists were now called upon to pass through another war period—bloody but brief—and this time with their own countrymen across the border. In the year following the passing of the Quebec Act, the long smouldering fires of secession in the American colonies burst into flame. On April 19th, 1775, the 'Minute men' of Concord Lexington 'fired the first shot heard around the world,' and the War of Independence began, which ended in the loss to England of her 'American' colonies. One of the first steps taken by the secessionists was to capture Ticonderoga and Crown Point on Lake Champlain, and thus possess the gateway to Canada. Forts St. John and Chambly soon followed, and on the 12th November Montreal succumbed; but the tide turned, when, flushed with their first success the Americans essayed the capture of Quebec, two daring attempts resulting in disastrous failure."

In 1808, although we did not possess then a full measure of liberty, though our old laws and customs were not entirely recognized, yet our forefathers were always loyal; and we find that Sir James Craig, the Governor, expressed himself as follows in opening Parliament:—

"He added, however, that means for meeting adverse eventualities were not to be neglected; and he had the firmest confidence that the co-operation of the people in that respect would not be wanting; while the loyalty and zeal of the militia met his own warmest approbation. All appearances gave promise that, if the colony were attacked, it would be defended in such a manner as was to be expected of a brave race, who fight for all that is dear to it. . . . The reply of the Assembly was of a character which ought to have persuaded Britons that they might reckon on the fidelity of the Canadians, despite the prejudices and fears which late repeated appeals to it betrayed."

In the years 1812, 1813 and 1814 a new war occurred between England and the United States. Again our forefathers had the opportunity to show their fidelity to the British Crown. Those who have read our history cannot but admire the struggles that took place then, and the extraordinary victories won by a few hundred men over thousands of soldiers. I again quote from page 30:—

"In the year 1812–14 the young auxiliary nation was called upon to undergo a severe ordeal through the United States declaring war against Great Britain, partly because of sympathy with France and partly through misunderstandings between the two Governments. The United States naturally selected Canada as the first object of attack. The position of the two countries was very unequal. Canada was totally unprepared for the conflict. She had less than 6,000 troops to defend 1,500 miles of frontier. Her entire population was under 300,000, while that of the United States was 8,000,000. Despite this startling disparity the Canadians, rallying as one man to the loyal support of their Government, bore themselves so nobly throughout the two years' struggles which ensued, that when it ended the advantage lay clearly upon their side, and the victories of Queenstown Heights and Chateauguay are to-day pointed to with the same patriotic pride as the Englishman takes in Waterloo or the Frenchman in Austerlitz."

Our celebrated historian Garneau, at page 188 of the English translation, says:—

"The result of the campaign of 1812, in which the zeal and spirit of the Anglo-Canadian population rivalled British courage and loyalty, was a practical justification of the sage and conciliatory policy of Sir George Prevost. This worthy Governor assembled the Chambers on the 29th December. He informed them that, in virtue of the power