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[FOR THE CRITIC.]

THE BRITISH FLAG.

From the French of Louis Fréchet.

Mr. Gustavus W. Wicksteed, of Ottawa, has made an excellent translation of this piece in unrhymed verse, from which this version, in a different measure, is derived. His is notable for fidelity of phrasing the original; I have taken some liberties, and with greater freedom of expression aim to give the sense of the author. The poem is an undoubted epitome of the race feeling prevalent in French Canada.

"Behold, my son! Admire—
So spake to me my sire—
"You banner, bravely borne,—
"Meteor of the morn!
"This land," my father said,
"Hath prospered where it led;
That banner of the free
Respecteth liberty."

"That banner, son of mine,
Is Britain's own ensign,
That ever waves on high
In unstained majesty;
It gladdens all the air,
Unfolding everywhere,
And over land and sea
Floateth triumphant!"

"An eighth part of the globe
Its beauty doth enrobe;
The ensign of command,
It waves o'er many a land,—
Hiding, with color new,
Some patch of heaven's blue,
Nor o'er obscure a ray
From the serene of day."

"O'er many a land and sea
It waves exultantly,
And follow, where it flies,
Progress and enterprise:
See its red glow emerge
O'er ocean's farthest verge,
While forest lands remote
Behold it proudly float!"

"It waves o'er great and small,
Its impress is on all;
To far off wild and den,
To tribes of savage men,
It dawns upon the sight,
The harbinger of light,
And for the world supplies
Each art to civilize."

"And in the march, direct,
Of conquering intellect,
Through mists of twilight gray
Behold it show the way;
Like dove from ark released,
After the flood had ceased,
Or guiding column high
Upward o'er Sinai."

"In days when men were bold,
That glorious flag of old
'Gainst ours was lifted high
In jealous rivalry,—
Deeming itself the peer
Of ours, and destined here
To put our own to shame
In the great race for fame."

"Ah, then it proved its might
In many a famous fight!
O'er many a sea, unfurled,
And country of the world,
Through years, with ours, at length,
It measured strength with strength;
Their's—ours—alternately,
Defeat and victory."

"God's will alone may be,—
He doomed the Fleurs-de-lis
Before that flag to bow,—
Secure and sovereign, now,
If, borne o'er hill and glen,
It wrought us sorrow, then,
It since of old distress
Hath taught forgetfulness."

"And if, with regal sway,
That banner floats, to-day,
The rocky ramparts o'er
Sacred to France of yore,
It waves benignantly

Above a people free;
No faith doth it betray,
It takes no right away."

"Vanish each gloomy form
Of battle and of storm;
Forget them, best we may,
In brightness of to-day;
And huzo, my son, we have
O'er us that banner brave,
Our freedom and our faith
To cover from all scath,
We must, where'er we see,
Salute it reverently."

"But, father, if I dare
Pardon me, and forbear,—
Say, is there not one, yet—
Our own—can we forget?
—Ah, that," exclaimed my sire,
His eyes instinct with fire,
"That standard of our King
Is quite another thing!
And he must bow who sees
And kiss it on his knees!"

—ARTHUR JOHN LOCKHART

A BURGLAR AND A BABY.

The burglar was not a bad-looking man, though his business had a bad look.

He stood by the door of a sleeping room and peered in.

A faint light was burning, and he could hear the measured breathing of someone asleep.

Cautiously he crept inside, stooping low and looking around.

No one there save a sleeping woman.

In an instant a cloth saturated with ether was thrown over her face, and he waited one, two, three—ten minutes, and the stertorous breathing of the sleeper told him the drug was doing its work.

With a dexterous hand he seized the jewellery and money lying on the dressing case, and began a quick search in the drawers of the case.

"Oo-o-o," came a voice from the shadows of the room.

Quick as a flash the burglar clutched his silent knife and turned to meet his victim.

No one was visible.

"Oo-o-o," came the voice again, and the burglar saw a child in its crib by the foot of the bed.

It was a pretty baby sleepily holding up its hands to him.

He let the knife fall to his side, and, stepping over to the crib touched the child.

It cooed again softly, and held up its arms for him to take it.

The impulse was beyond his control, and he lifted the baby to his bosom, and it nestled its soft, white cheek down to his, and put its white arm around his neck.

He purred to it, and in a moment its curly head was laid against his face, and it was asleep again.

"Never seen a kid like that," he whispered to himself. "Most of um is afraid of strangers," and tenderly he laid it in the crib.

Then he went back to the dressing case.

He stood still a moment, and then furtively looked over his shoulder towards the crib.

The sleeping face of the child was turned towards him.

Slowly he replaced in the case all he had taken from it, hastily he snatched from the woman's face the saturated cloth, opened the door near the bed, and quietly slipped downstairs.

Once on the street again he looked up at the house angrily.

"Dang it!" he growled, "a man that ain't got more gizzard than I have ought to git out of the business."

And he disappeared into the shadows of the night.—*The Million.*

LEARNING THINGS.

The drummer was looking so sad that it attracted the attention of the hotel clerk.

"What's the matter?" asked that functionary, "lost a friend, or your job?"

"No; worse," responded the drummer.

"Lost two friends?" queried the sympathetic clerk.

"No; just thinking of a man I met out here in Adrian last night at supper."

"What did he do to you? Beat you at poker?"

"No; he asked me a question, and I answered it by asking him another."

"Give me the particulars."

"Well, it was this way"—and the drummer showed by his looks how badly he felt to bring it all up again—"we were at supper, and I had been pretty smart, and the man had been very quiet."

"Did you ever notice," he said, as innocent and kindly as a school-teacher, "that over in Wisconsin the people shake the pepper box this way, while those in Indiana hold it fast and put it on the bottom, this way?"

"I had noticed it and told him so."

"I'm from Indiana," he said, knocking some pepper on his potatoes.

"Yes," said I, "it shows on you."

"Do you know," said he seriously, "why they do it differently?"

"No," said I, "why do they?"

"To get the pepper out," said he earnestly, and then the gang at the table gave me the laugh in eighteen places, and the man asked me how much salary I got for learning things."