

EDITORIAL NOTES.

GREENBACKS.

A gentleman fresh from a brief journey in the United States gives it as his opinion that the Americans will soon repudiate their war indebtedness, basing it on the fact that the people place no sort of reliance on the 'greenbacks,' which have been so profusely issued. All seem animated with a desire to get rid of them. Lightly come they lightly go.—*Exchange.*

The best commentary on this is the fact that 'greenbacks' are eagerly taken by all classes of society in the United States in preference to ordinary bank notes. The statement that people place no sort of reliance in them is simply a falsehood.

A GEM.

An English laborer, whose child was suddenly killed by the falling of a beam, wrote the following lines, suggested by the melancholy event. They are touchingly beautiful:

Sweet laughing child!—the cottage door
Stands free and open now,
But oh! its sunshine glids no more
The gladness of thy brow!
Thy merry step hath passed away—
Thy laughing sport is hushed for aye.

Thy mother by the fireside sits,
And listens for thy call;
And slowly—slowly, as she knits,
Her quiet tears down fall—
Her little hindering thing is gone,
And undisturbed she may work on?

BIG GUNS.

We published a paragraph from the *New York Tribune* the other day, stating what Mr. Ericsson was going to do with a great gun. The writer assumed that this gun was much more formidable than any other in existence, and took for granted that (what might have been true some years ago) the 63-pounder was the best gun in the English service. This idea is somewhat interfered with by a statement in late English news that successful experiments with a great Armstrong gun, throwing shot and shell weighing five hundred and fifty pounds, had been made at Shoeburyness. We think we are correct in stating that this is the heaviest projectile throw from any practicable gun in modern times. The 15 inch guns in the United States are called 500-pounders, but the shot is really much lighter.

POLAND.

A French officer who has just returned to Paris from Poland describes the Russian army as so entirely demoralised that, should the insurrection only last till spring, the force opposing it will have fallen to pieces.

This is too good to be true. No troops in the world are less liable to demoralization than those of Russia.

BRAY.

Mr. Bray of Bloomfield, Oakland County, Mich., is making a flying-machine 'on the model of the wild goose,' with wings and a practicable tail. This modern Icarus intends to make his first flight in the Spring—time for his second not fixed.

We fear Mr. Bray is much on the 'model of the goose' himself, unless his name should be correct in suggesting assinine proclivities. In that case the only difference between Mr. Bray and a balloon in difficulties would be that while one would be a balloon in an eddy the other would be a niddy in a balloon.

THEATRE ROYAL.

Throughout last week the renowned Ghost—that impalpable, but distinctly visible, entity, which, according to popular belief, can only be found at hours 'when churchyards yawn and graves give up their dead,' could be seen at the Theatre at all reasonable hours of the night, attracting large audiences and giving universal satisfaction. Our ethereal friend is decidedly a curiosity. It is neither amenable to the conventional arrangements of ghost-land, nor to the laws which hedge round mundane mortals. It can laugh at cock-crowing—which sends Hamlet's ghost back to his prison—and move about with sublimest disregard of the obstructions which may be in its way. A table, for instance, is in its path, but it neither turns from a straight line, nor goes to the trouble of moving the table. Swords are thrust through it, pistols fired at, or into its ear, and a ghostly laugh is the only result. We have heard a few wise individuals—who were all the wiser on the subject from not having seen it—aver that Mr. Stanfeld had not the genuine ghost of Prof. Pepper. On this point we cannot decide, but we have no hesitation in saying that anything more genuine than Mr. Stanfeld's spectre would be a failure. Here is a human figure in shadowy but perfect outline, which can walk, talk, laugh and sing; which can appear in an instant, and vanish in an instant. Now what other conditions go to the making up of a ghost?

On Monday the manager produced Boucicault's play of the Octoroon in a very good style indeed. The rapid succession of incidents of absorbing interest in this play, and the fact that it is a picture of real life ensure for it attention whenever it is at all well played. This requisite is happily found in the acting at the Theatre Royal. Miss Placide, as Zoe, the Octoroon, sustains her character well; and Messrs. Church (McClosky), Daly (Pete), and Warwick (Webb-to, the Indian) were also deserving of praise.

NOTES OF TRAVEL, AND OF READING.

No. 2.

THE FRONTIERS OF CANADA EXAMINED.

It was a day in August, 1861, the heat eighty-six in the shade. But by the river side there was a light breeze blowing, not quite cool, yet graciously refreshing. It was the summer scented breath of fields of fragrant hay, of ripening grain, of flowers and fruits growing wild by the forests not far away; and of a river, two miles wide, rolling rapidly down the Canadian shore, but loitering among its islands in mid channel, and among its bays and creeks on the southern side. The place was Edwardsburgh, County of Grenville, Central Canada.

I chose for a pathway the bank which shuts out the river and confines the canal, the most westerly section of that matchless series of water-ways for ships, called the St. Lawrence canals. After walking a distance of about four miles down the river bank, I heard a boy shouting in a voice clear and sharp as a bugle, 'Boat-a-hoy! Boat-a-hoy!'

The youth, ten or eleven years old, had been ferried across the canal from the Canadian shore, at this point a hundred yards wide, and desired to reach an island, distant in the river ten or eleven hundred yards. At the western end where it breasted the current, that island had a bold headland eighty or ninety feet in altitude, and perpendicular bulwarks of rock along half of its length; but towards the east it declined to a level with the water, which was there placid and formed an eddy which served for a harbour. The entire length of the island seemed to be nearly a mile. Its breadth was sufficient to make it an ample farm, as the limestone rocks under the soil, and the half cleared forest of oak, elm and maple above, had given it a rare fertility.

Nearer to the Canada shore was another island, separated from the canal bank by an arm of the great St. Lawrence, so slender, though in places deep, that a fugitive would not have hesitated to dash through it if pursued by a mad bull, or by a swift policeman with a criminal warrant in his pocket. On this island horned cattle and young horses, to which it afforded summer pasturage, were assembled under the shadows of the out-spreading trees, to escape the hot sun, or were standing deep in the river-side pools to drown the flies and enjoy a bath.

I knew from Major Clarke, of Edwardsburgh, that this island had been known as Presque Isle, from a period antecedent to the time of any British subjects settling there. That name signifies 'a peninsula, nearly an island.' It was a resting place of the French Fur Traders and Jesuit Missionaries, like other places bearing the same name, over a distance of two thousand miles between Quebec and the upper waters of the Mississippi and Lake Superior.

In the war of 1812, Major Clarke, who was then a lieutenant in temporary command of a company of militia, posted as an outlying picket, discovered that during the night a party of armed Americans had crossed from New York State and occupied Presque Isle. He attacked and routed them. No record of this has been preserved. This gentleman, when superiors fell at the battle of Lundy's Lane, had for a time the command of four companies, and was hotly and effectively engaged. He complains that throughout that war militia officers were systematically snubbed by the superior officers of the regulars. But not so in the campaigns against the Canadian rebels and American sympathisers in 1837-38, in which he also actively served. Then the militia and volunteers were treated as the equals of the regulars. Major Clark (now Lieutenant-Colonel) after the war of 1812-14 was for several years an agent of the North-West Fur Company, in a region lying between the north-western tributaries of Lake Superior and Hudson's Bay. He showed me a topographical map of lakes, streams, and mountains, of which he believes no other person has yet made any more regular survey.

That boy on the canal bank was still shouting 'Boat-a-hoy!' I approached, and soon engaged him in conversation. He was a youth of pleasing intelligence; Dutch by descent; Shaver his name—a descendant of that Peter Shaver, who, near this spot, in 1793, met Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of Kent, and father of Queen Victoria; and by the Prince sent as a United Empire Loyalist, his thanks and that of his family to King George the Third, 'for the very good farm—yes, the first-rate capital farm, the good King, bless his Majesty forever, and more than all that, had given him for his loyalty in the American war, and as compensation for what he had lost on the Mohawk River.'

I asked the boy, 'what is the name of this island?'

'That nearest to Canada?' said he.

'Yes, that next to us.'

'That—what be its name; why—its name—that be Sam Shaver's Island.'

'And the other—that next in the river; has it a name?'

'Name—yes; that is Henry Shaver's Island.'

Before the latest adjustment, or as some term it, disturbance, of the boundary line, both islands belonged to Canada. Daniel Webster, on the part of the United States, Lord Ashburton (Alexander Baring), on the part of Great Britain, concurring, by a dip of ink and a dozen scotchies traced red ten-twelfths of all the islands between Cornwall in Central Canada and Lake Huron to the United States.

And so one morning Henry Shaver was visited by an American revenue cutter, and informed that Great Britain had transferred him, his family and their island to the United States, and that he must forthwith become an American citizen or surrender his inheritance. This, however, was a mistake. It was rectified, and the island and respected proprietor remained British. The change of boundary was caused by the 'usual' channel of navigation being adopted as the dividing line. Perhaps no fairer line could have been selected. But as the deepest channel, the 'usual' of navigation, runs nearest the Canada shore, and as most of the islands lie south of that, they fell in the lottery of diplomacy and politics to the United States. Most of them in the St. Lawrence command and may obstruct navigation under the British flag, as is also the position of islands in the Detroit river; and further west at the confluence of Huron and Michigan Lakes, where Makinaw island, already fortified, rises up 'the Gibraltar of the west.' [See report of committee of Congress on lake and river defences].—But at Cornwall, in Central Canada, two miles above the point where the geographical line strikes the St. Lawrence river, which line has defused the boundary with Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont on one side, New Brunswick and Canada on the other, there is Barnhart island, two and a half miles long, separated from Canada only by a fordable armlet of the great river, and which by the accident of Daniel Webster having had the pliable Lord Ashburton to negotiate with, cuts off Canada from the only channel of river navigation which exists. There the St. Lawrence is wholly American, and the land on each side is the territory of the United States. It would have been no more detrimental to the interests of this Province had the diplomatists taken some miles from the mainland of Canada along the river bank than is the deplorable blunder of having ceded Barnhart's island, and all the breadth of the navigable river between it and New York State to the opposite nation. It was surveyed by United States military engineers for fortification, in the Slidel and Mason crisis—winter of 1861-62. There is a Canadian channel of navigation through the Cornwall locks of the St. Lawrence canals. But these again will be wholly under command of whatever force in a time of war may occupy and hold Barnhart's island.

The Republican cannon planted on American batteries need not be of long range to destroy the canal; and a not very long range may lay the residence of the Hon. John Sandfield Macdonald and the town of Cornwall in ruins, at one crash of shot and shell.

The course which Mr. Sandfield Macdonald and the newspapers of his party seem to have adopted for the preservation of the Province, has been to accept desultory companies of volunteer militia and leave them to subsist for a season on the patriotism of the rank and file, and the generosity of enthusiastic officers; then, unpaid, unappreciated, they are left to dwindle towards early extinction.

The opponents of Mr. Sandfield Macdonald and of his party of inactivity, know the inefficiency of the defensive forces—know the defencelessness of the prolonged frontier; and yet by every impulse of political aberration they strive to affront the Federal States, and provoke them to irrepressible hostility against this Province.

But say they whose military education may have never reached the alphabet of strategy, though they conduct influential newspapers, 'We, having the St. Lawrence canals to ourselves, can bring up any number of gunboats, and England will furnish any number required.'

Softly, old countryman, or young Canadian. A boat's crew of twenty men—twelve to work, the rest to keep armed watch—may run the St. Lawrence canals dry at any point, by the appliance of well-known forces of destruction; and, with the labour of one or two hours in the darkness of night. The banks might be cut down in an hour by common laborers; the locks and lock gates exploded to smash by the petards of military engineers.

'But,' you exclaim, 'those canals will be guarded by Her Majesty's troops, militia and volunteers.' No, they will not. All the military forces in Upper Canada will be required at points of concentration to defend cities, or take the field to fight battles. But if there were no battles to be fought, a hypothesis impossible in war, all the regular troops and volunteer militia which have yet been under drill could not furnish nightly pickets in sufficient strength to guard the St. Lawrence canals and the parallel line of the Grand Trunk Railway, which would also be exposed. The communication between Montreal and Lake Ontario might be cut off at any point in defiance of all power of hindrance. And the date of that possible terrible future of Canada may be nearer or farther distant, according as the Clyde builders of Pampero pirate ships, Liverpool builders of Alabamas and Alexandras, persist and succeed in their incipient treason against Queen Victoria and the peace of the British Empire, by setting Her Majesty's proclamation of neutrality at defiance. The date of deadly conflict with our opposite neighbors, and of mutual devastation of frontiers, may be hastened, or delayed, or postponed—postponed forever, according as the fugitives from the Southern confederacy and their lunatic coadjutors, British subjects in Canada, persist in, or refrain from, their plots against the American national government with which Britain is at peace.

ALEXANDER SOMERVILLE.

AN UNPROFITABLE JOB.—A very clever arrangement was made by one of our merchants on Fore St. yesterday with an Irish laborer, who declined to accept a 'quarter' to assist in hoisting some barrels out of a cellar, and would only consent to work at 30c. per hour, which was accepted by the merchant. The labor was completed in fifteen minutes, and the clerk directed to pay 'Pat' 8cts., at which 'Pat' claimed the original offer of 25 cts., but the merchant couldn't seem to see it in that light.

A NEW HAMPSHIRE paper says, those who went to Lebanon one day last week for examination were shocked to see a white man there, followed by his young son, whom he was endeavoring to sell at the highest price as a substitute. The man at last after much bantering, sold his boy for \$450, and pocketed the greenbacks with the coolest satisfaction, while the boy dejectedly passed into the Provost's office to report for service.