

ONE OF CANADA'S HEROINES.

MADELEINE DE VERCHERES.*

BY JOHN BRADY.

I.

"Oh! my country, bowed in anguish 'neath a weight of bitter woe,
Who shall save thee from the vengeance of the desolating foe?
They have sworn a heathen oath that every Christian soul must die—
God of Heaven, in mercy shield us! Father, hear thy children's cry."

II.

Thus prayed Madeleine, the daughter of an old, heroic line—
Grecian poet, had he seen her, would have deemed her race divine;
But as the golden sun transcends the beauty of the brightest star,
Than all the charms of face or form her maiden heart was lovelier far.

III.

We can see her now in fancy, through the dim years gazing back
To those stormy days of old, the days of valiant Frontenac,
When the thinly settled land was sadly wasted far and near,
And before the savage foe the people fled like stricken deer.

IV.

'Tis the season when the forest wears its many coloured dress,
And strange foreboding whisper answers back the winds' caress,
As the swaying pines repeat the murmurs of the distant waves,
While the children of the Summer flutter softly to their graves.

V.

But—was that another whisper, warning her of ill to come,
As she stands beside the river, near her father's fortress-home?
Hark! the sound of stealthy footsteps creeps upon the throbbing ear—
Maiden, fly! the foe approaches, and no human aid is near.

VI.

Surely He who decked with beauty this fair earth on which we dwell
Never meant that men should change it by their madness into hell:
He who gave the trees their glory, gave the birds their gift of song,
Cannot smile from out yon heavens at the sight of human wrong.

VII.

But those savage hearts no beauty wins to thoughts of tender ruth—
Mother fond, or gentle maid, or smiling innocence of youth.
See! with fierce exulting yells the flying maiden they pursue—
Hear her prayer, O God, and save her from that wild, vindictive crew.

VIII.

Never ere that day or since was such a race by maiden run;
Never against such fearful odds was wished-for goal so swiftly won:
Fifty foes are on her track, the bullets graze her floating hair—
But worse than vain is all their rage, for God above has heard her prayer.

IX.

Madeleine has reached the Fort; the gates are closed against the foe,
But now a terror-stricken throng sends up to Heaven a wall of woe—
Feeble men and fainting women, without heart, or hope, or plan—
'Then it was that God gave courage to a maid to act a man.

X.

Then it was that Madeleine bethought her of her father's fame;
'Never shall a soldier's daughter die the coward's death of shame;
Never in the days to come, when Canada is great and proud,
Be it said a Christian maiden by a heathen's threat was cowed.

XI.

"He is but a craven wretch would bid me yield in such an hour—
Never yet my country's sons in peril's face were known to cower—
No, my people! God is with us: 'tis our homes that we defend—
Let the savage do his worst, we will oppose him to the end.

XII.

"Women, I am but a girl, but heroes' blood is in my veins,
And I will shed it drop by drop, before I see my land in chains;
Let them tear me limb from limb, or strew my ashes to the wind,
Ere I disgrace the name I bear, or leave a coward's fame behind.

XIII.

"Brothers mine, though young in years, you are old enough to know
That to shed your blood is noble, fighting with your country's foe!
Be the lesson forgotten that our noble father gave,
Whether glory be its guerdon or it win us but a grave.

XIV.

"Come, my people, take your places, every one as duty calls,
Death to every foe who ventures to approach these fortress walls!
Let no point be unprotected, leave the rest to God on high,
Then we shall have done our duty, even if we have to die."

XV.

Then she raised their drooping courage, matchless maiden, Madeleine,
And the cry "to arms" re-echoed, till the roof-tree rang again,
Cannons thundered, muskets rattled and the clank of steel was heard,
Till the baffled foe retreated, like a wolf untimely scared.

XVI.

Seven days and seven nights, with sleepless eye and bated breath,
They held the Fort against the foe that lurked around them plotting death!
At last a joyous challenge came, it was the brave La Monnerie,
And up to Heaven arose a shout, "The foe has fled and we are free."

—Rose-Belford Monthly.

* See Parkman's "Frontenac."

THE Cities and Towns of Canada

ILLUSTRATED.

X.

UP THE OTTAWA.

FROM AYLMER TO PORTAGE-DU-FORT—A CHANCE FOR SPECULATORS—A CHARMING PLACE TO RUSTICATE IN—A BIG BRIDGE—RAFTING—THE LEGEND OF THE CALUMET.

A ride of twenty-four miles on the Union Forwarding Company's steamer leaving Aylmer at 8 o'clock a.m., brought to view the Chats Rapids which form a picturesque termination to the Dechesne Lake. When trade was brisk and the railway to Pembroke existed only on paper the Steamboat Company conveyed freight and passengers to the next stretch of navigable water by means of a horse railway, but the traffic does not now warrant the expense. The portage to Chats Lake is about three miles long. I did not pursue my journey by steamer, but landed on the Quebec side, a short distance below the rapids. A small stream called "The Quio" flows into the Ottawa here and the village has consequently been christened Quio. It is a straggling, unpretentious settlement, and the little life apparent seemed as flat as the ale which mine host of a grandly named hotel doled out at the rate of five cents a gill. It is a pity, I think, that a generous glass of the good honest brew from malt and hops is so difficult to obtain outside the cities and large towns of the Dominion. For lack of it men are led to drink a vile liquid called "Proof" which a friend in the distillery business says is the worst stuff the distilleries turn out. Some call it "White Whisky" and others "High Wines," but call it what you like, it is a vicious liquid suggestive of vitriol. It is now greatly drunk in the rural districts, taking the place of the once universal Old Rye. The retailers have found that it is very profitable, and the consumers are deluded into the belief that because it is colourless it is superior to any other liquor made. Whenever I see the bottle going round I feel inclined to cry out "Where are the Police! or Liquor Inspectors?"

The navigable stretch between the Chats and Portage-du-Fort is about twenty-four miles long. I made the distance by road, being desirous of seeing the country on the Quebec side. It is mostly rolling, with here and there a flat section. The proposed railway to Portage-du-Fort will be by no means a difficult undertaking. A good deal of land is under cultivation, but the farmers as a rule seem to be a poor class. About half-way on the road there is a sleepy little village called Bristol. Drawing near to Portage-du-Fort the country grew more mountainous and, on the still evening air, the roar of rushing waters could be heard telling of our approach to one of those picturesque parts of the Ottawa which are so characteristic of the grand stream, and which are destined, I believe, to make it in the near future a favourite route for pleasure travel.

Portage-du-Fort is prettily situated at the foot of a deep bay enclosed by thickly wooded mountains. It is the terminal point of the Chats Lake navigation, the river above for eight miles being full of rapids of the wildest description. The Calumet Chute, which is at the head of this stretch of wild water, is regarded as one of the most dangerous along the Ottawa or its tributaries. The "Calumet Fever" is the name given the dread some raftsmen have of facing this part of their journey.

Portage-du-Fort is in the County of Pontiac. I could not get the date of its settlement, but learned that it was surveyed and laid out as a village in 1844. The population now is about seven hundred. The first settler was Elisha Bentley, who probably located a few years before this date. A brother-in-law named Bisset joined him, and the two obtained a grant of a square mile of land on the condition that they would erect a saw-mill. This was done, and the firm cleared considerable land and went into the manufacture of potash. They did not succeed in making both ends meet and the property passed into the hands of Thos. Darrell, a lumberman, who had invested money in the speculation. Darrell took out a large raft of splendid masts, but failed financially, and Messrs. Atkinson & Osborne, who had been supplying him, stepped in and took possession. Change of ownership did not bring about a change of luck, for soon afterwards the estate passed into the hands of Barnett & Co., bankers, of London, England. An old country clergyman, the Rev. Henry Osborne, purchased the property and after a time sold it to a relative, George William Osborne, who succeeded no better than his predecessors. Finally his son-in-law, Mr. John Amy, purchased it and has held possession since.

THE AMY PROPERTY

consists of over six hundred acres of land in and about the village, with a farm close by making in all twelve hundred acres. The first mentioned estate includes a magnificent water privilege capable of running half-a-dozen or more large establishments. At present there is a large flour and grist mill with three run of stones and a commodious and completely fitted saw-mill containing four gangs. The farm-house is a neatly designed structure, built of the native

marble. The barns and out-houses are of a superior order and very roomy. On the estate is a marble quarry of some fifty acres. This marble is very beautiful and easily quarried. It has not yet attracted the attention it merits, but the probability is that it will soon be in large demand. It is now being used in the construction of a church at Brockville—Mr. Amy having given the material and Mr. Rattray having carted it to the Canada Central at a nominal rate.

In connection with the water privilege, I should have mentioned that a few years ago a carding and cloth mill was projected but not completed. The foundation and race-way were built and are to-day in an excellent state of preservation. Mr. Amy is desirous of finding a purchaser for the whole property and would be willing to accept any reasonable offer, as he finds his own business as a general merchant and postmaster fully as much as he can properly attend to.

AS A PLEASURE RESORT

Portage-du-Fort offers many attractions for those who desire a cessation from worldly care and are fond of nature in a picturesque garb. The wild stretch of the river before mentioned is full of lovely scenes, and there are countless opportunities for glorious rambles along the mountainous shore and among the numerous islands which break up the stream into a thousand gushing channels. The paths made by the voyageurs when there was no wagon-road across the portage, and everything had to be carried on the back, wind through the most beautiful scenery, and for real natural beauty compare well with any of the laboriously constructed "Lover's Walks" to be found in city show grounds. A short walk along one of these paths leads to the "Devil's Elbow," the name given a deep chasm through which the water rushes in furious haste—the abrupt turn which the name indicates increasing the wildness of the foam-crested waves.

The proximity of such a large area of rapid, splashing water renders the air about Portage-du-Fort pleasantly fresh and exceedingly healthy. It is a poor place for doctors. The one I met had turned storekeeper and mill-owner, and had endeavoured to get into the Local Legislature.

There are two good hotels in the village, at either of which the tourist will meet with a genial host and comfortable accommodation.

The Ottawa Hotel, kept by a Mr. J. W. Agret, is the oldest of the two. It is situated on the river shore and commands a fine view up the bay. Mr. Agret is an old lumberman and a lover of good living. He is of Falstaffian proportions, and like that doughty knight is fond of a jest. Behind the hotel is a marble obelisk bearing the following inscription:—

TO COMMEMORATE THE VISIT

OF

LADY HEAD

Who made the tour of the

UPPER OTTAWA

IN

A BARK CANOE,

ON

September, 1856.

The Rattray House occupies an elevated site in the centre of Mill street. It is a fine building of native marble, containing a number of unusually large and lofty rooms which are furnished in city style. Mr. Rattray claims that his premises are "the best in the County of Pontiac." Stages carrying the mail leave twice daily, except Sunday, at seven a.m. and seven p.m., for Healey's Station on the Canada Central, connecting with trains to and from Ottawa, Brockville and Pembroke. Mr. Rattray was for many years agent for the famous lumberman, Mr. John Egan, and the administrative tact which he displayed in that responsible position shows to good advantage in his capacity as host. Attached to the hotel is a large livery, Mr. Rattray doing a considerable trade in carrying raftsmen across the portage during the period the timber is running.

Portage-du-Fort contains several well-stocked general stores, and that of which Mr. John Bourke is proprietor is a good example. Besides the store, which is very commodious, there are several large warehouses. The quantity of goods disposed of annually at these stores in the lumbering districts is really wonderful to one accustomed to the splitting up of business as carried on in the towns and cities. A well established country store will combine a dozen branches of trade, and do a considerable business in each line. A good many, too, have branch establishments scattered away up the river.

There are

FOUR CHURCHES

in the village: Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian. The first is prettily situated on an eminence overlooking the rapids. It is of stone and was built in 1856. The incumbent, Rev. Mr. Motherwell, has also charge of Bryson, where he holds fortnightly services.

The Roman Catholic Church was built in 1850, during the pastorate of the Rev. Father Bourier. It is dedicated to Ste. Melanie. Rev. Antoine Brunet, a son of La Belle France, is in charge. I found him a most genial companion, and was delighted with his impartial comments upon current events. He appeared to have a wide acquaintance among the prominent men of

Canada, and his personal recollections were most interesting. Father Brunet has been in Canada some twenty years, and for some little time was a close personal friend of the late Thomas D'Arcy McGee, of whom he relates many characteristic anecdotes.

The Wesleyans are ministered to by the Rev. Mr. Fowler, and the Presbyterians presided over by the Rev. Mr. Turnbull.

THE INTER-PROVINCIAL BRIDGE

which connects Ontario and Quebec at this point, is a modern structure one thousand feet long. The entire stream of the Ottawa is bridged at only one other point, viz., at the Chaudiere Falls. The Portage-du-Fort bridge enables connection with the Canada Central Railway at Healy's Station, seven miles south-west. It is proposed that the Q. M. O. & O. Railway shall cross in the same vicinity, the numerous islands and rocky ledges rendering the building of a bridge an easy work.

RAFTING.

In my last I devoted some space to a few details respecting lumbering or the work of obtaining and preparing in marketable shape the crude wealth of our forests. I propose now to give a few particulars regarding the conveyance of the timber to market. Sometimes the sticks, which run from twenty to sixty feet long, and from twelve to twenty inches square, are drawn from the forest direct to where they can be made up into cribs. This is not often the case, however, now as the front limits of the available lumber region have been pretty well cleared long ago. As a rule the sticks are allowed to float one by one down the tributaries till they reach the Ottawa, or "Grand River" as it is sometimes called. These journeys down the smaller rivers are of the most varied character. Perhaps at the start the timber will float in a lake of magnificent proportions. If so, the sticks are enclosed in a boom—a series of sticks connected by chains—and thus they will be pulled along by means of a floating capstan which is anchored at various points. The outlet of the lake may be smooth for a time, but it will eventually develop into a wild rapid stream, probably ending in a precipitous fall or foaming cascade locally termed a "Chute." The timber has to be let loose here and men are detailed to see that it passes along, as sticks often get jammed among rocks and speedily form the basis for an immense pile. The breaking up of these "jams" is very risky work, and many lives are annually lost by the timber suddenly giving way or by the men slipping off the sticks into the surging waters. This work is called "Driving." The men wear boots with soles and heels full of sharp points to enable them to get a better hold upon the slippery timber. During a drive the sticks often get badly broken at the ends, and now and then they will be broken in two as though they were but toothpicks.

HOW A CRIB IS MADE.

Arrived at the Ottawa, they are made up into cribs—that is to say sticks are brought side by side until a width of twenty-four feet is obtained. The sticks are kept together by six cross pieces laid two at each end, and two in the centre. These cross pieces or "traverses" are fastened to the sticks by wooden pins two inches thick. On top of the cross pieces are laid at equal distances four sticks of timber which are termed "loading sticks." The whole is made tight and solid by means of wedges which are driven between the sticks which form the crib proper. The cribs are navigated with long oars or sweeps. In parts of the river where towing is to be obtained, the cribs are joined together by "cap pieces" which are short slabs having a hole at each end. These holes fit the wooden pins before mentioned. When thus joined the cribs form a raft. When the raft arrives at the head of a rapid the cribs are once more separated and taken down singly or two at a time according to the nature of the rapid and the "pitch" of water. From Roche Capitaine, 66 miles above Pembroke, to the Chaudiere Falls at Ottawa, wherever the rapids are diversified by precipitous falls or chutes, the Government have built slides or artificial water-ways for the passage of cribs. As the cribs are passed through the slides they are rafted at the foot and once more proceed as one piece till the next rapid is reached. A raft will contain from eighty to one hundred and fifty cribs. One hundred and twenty cribs make a good sized raft. The number of men required to run a crib through the rapids varies with the place. On the Des Joachim Rapid, which I found a short but wild piece of water, seven are required; but two take possession of the crib at the entrance to the slides. Jobbers or local raftsmen generally assist in taking the timber over these slides, receiving so much per crib. In running rapids each crib is in charge of a pilot whose word is law. He knows, or is supposed to know, the position of every rock, the depth of water at every ledge, the location and strength of every eddy. The men at the oars watch him closely and at the word of command the apparently unwieldy mass of timber is brought around or hither and thither as surely as if it were a racing craft.

EXCITING SPORT.

A trip on a crib down one of these wild stretches is about as exhilarating as any form of amusement I am acquainted with. A stranger will always meet with a quiet welcome. All he has to do is to take care not to get in the way of the men. When the crib is cast off from the raft there is generally a little rowing to be done

* Bouvier