



FEBRUARY MUSINGS.

"How dazzling white the snowy scene! deep, deep,
The stillness of the winter Sabbath day,—
Not even a footfall heard, smooth are the fields,
Each hollow pathway level with the plain:
Hid are the bushes, save that here and there
Are seen the topmost shoots of brush or broom."

Mountain, field and home lie shrouded in their winter dress. All night and all day the pure, fairy flakes, silently chased each other down, only stopping when daylight faded into night. And then through the heavy gray clouds above a shuddering sigh ran again, and yet again, till the clouds were parted, and lo! the Moon, with her attendant satellites, appeared.

Oh! glorious light, so pure, so ethereal, that lookest alike on the homes of misery and affluence, what seest thou this night?

I see a city, beautiful to look upon, with its mighty river fast locked in the icy hands of winter. Thrice were her waters caught by those strong hands, only to be laughed to scorn, as with a wild rush she made her escape and bounded on her wayward course to the ocean, till caught again, she yielded. Behind the city rises the mountain to the height of some five hundred feet, covered with its naked trees, save where the pine groves lift aloft their dark green heads. Here the fairy flakes have clustered, crowding one upon another, till the needles in a low murmur made complaint, and called upon the north wind to rid them of their burden.

"Nay," said he in his lowest whisper, "to every one is given his work. Sometimes it is light, sometimes it is heavy. Be thankful when it is light. Pray for strength to bear it when it is heavy. And you are ungrateful to complain of a burden which does but increase your loveliness."

Quietness broods over the city. As leaving the mountain I steal through the deserted streets. The merry tinkling of the sleigh bells has ceased, and save a few belated ones, whose noiseless footsteps sink into the soft snow, sound there is not.

The homes of the people are in darkness. Stay! There is a light. The curtains are not drawn, so I look within and see a room, the furnishing of which speaks of wealth and culture. Seated by the fire is a man. Suddenly the door of his room opens and there appears a shadowy something. Gliding to a seat, it leans forward and looks into the other's eyes.

"Who art thou? What does thou want?" cries the man, shrinking from this vague shadow.

Then it made answer: "What were thy thoughts before I entered?"

"That there was no such thing as a God and a hereafter, that life has but a dreary existence after all, and that I was tired, tired of everything."

"Come," said the shadow, "and I will show you a thing or two."

Opening the window the two stood upon the balcony. "Cast thine eyes upward, note the deep blue heavens dotted with their wondrously beautiful stars. Now downward, let thine eyes wander over the scene that meets them. What sayest thou now, oh wretched man, of brief life here below?"

The man raised his eyes to the heavens. A second time over his face a wondrous change crept: sullen despair and indifference gave place to one of glad joy. Oh! what hope and faith now shone from his eyes as in low trembling tones he said: "I rejoice that now I know there is a God."

February with its storms will soon be over, and then after a while will come the long, long days of sunshine, when once more all things sleeping will feel the quickening life run through them, and, shaking off their fetters, will spring forth to meet the new life. MORDUE.

ANOTHER WINTER'S SNOW.

Another winter's snow is round me falling,
Another winter's storm about me raves,
Dear twins of brightness, past all fond recalling,
My heart seems with you in your silent graves.

'Tis not the sunshine fleet, nor summer glory,
'Tis not the rapture swept from land and sea,
Thou hast, my heart, another, sadder story,
These may return, but thine no more to thee!

Thou hadst a song—ah, what enraptured singing
Could reach the measure of that heavenly strain?
E'en now thou hear'st in faint, far echoes singing,
The silvery notes thou never canst regain.

Thou hadst a dream—of more than earthly brightness,
No summer sun with half its radiance shone—
'Tis thine no more—alas, the dreary whiteness—
Winter is here, and song and dream are gone.

Yet something bids me wait, hope on, despair not,
If here we lose, 'tis that we more regain;
The spirit's highest meed they reach not, share not,
Who win it not through grief and loss and pain!

Toronto.

M. J. W.

THE WAR OF 1812.

And what was the position of Canada when war was declared by the United States? In a condition which seemingly placed her at the mercy of her foe, owing to the conduct of the Home Government, who, though frequently asked for assistance, and repeatedly assured of the fact that the present disturbed condition must end in war between the two countries, could not or would not believe the true state of affairs, and so put off sending the much-needed help.

The Home Government had yet to learn that the fair domain of Canada was the prize sought by the Americans, who hoped, by obtaining easy possession of it, to gratify their unreasonable hatred against Britain, and drive for ever from the Western Continent a flag which dared to lift and flaunt its colours so near their own. Aye, though it had at one time been unfurled with many a loyal shout by some of these very men who now repudiated it.

As it was, the regular troops in both provinces amounted to little over 4,000 men. The militia consisted of about 2,000 men in the Lower Province and about 1,800 in the Upper, mostly unarmed and undisciplined, but who, lacking these two essential things, possessed a courage and love for their country which was soon to be tried.

A frontier of 1,700 miles in length to be guarded against a foe who had the advantage in the commencement of the war of being the assailing party, and could thus penetrate any part of the long frontier they pleased, while the whole had to be defended. Though it is worthy of notice that during the war the frontier between Lower Canada and the States of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, was unassailed by the enemy.

On the day war was declared the ships in the harbour at Boston showed their flags at half-mast, in token of mourning, and, at a meeting of the inhabitants, resolutions were passed condemning the action Congress had taken. While such were the sentiments of the more enlightened people of the United States, the Democratic faction resolved to push the war to the last extremity.

It is then to be little wondered at, that when the news of the declaration of war reached Canada, a feeling of gloom and despondency settled down upon many of the inhabitants, when they thought of how badly prepared they were to face an enemy who had long been preparing for war, and were in a much better state of drill and efficiency.

Like a ship which has lost its helmsman in a storm, and, left to the mercy of the waves, is tossed hither and thither with each contending current, so did the minds of the people battle with storms against which they felt so powerless. But suddenly a master-hand grasped the rudder and steered with a clear eye through the uncertainty and gloom. Well may Canada reverence the name of Brock, who at this great crisis of her history stands so prominently forth.

Brock had long seen that nothing short of war would satisfy the Americans, and therefore endeavoured to rouse the Home Government to take precautions. But so strongly convinced were they that the Americans would cease all hostilities on the repeal of the "Orders-in-Council," that they would not hear of any aggressive movement, but recommended a policy of forbearance. Hampered on all sides as Brock was, and his repeated warnings set at naught, he nevertheless prepared with all his strength and courage to face what seemed a hopeless struggle. He strengthened the defences of the Ancient Capital, Cape Diamond, and visited all the frontier forts, making such preparations as were in his power. On the 26th of June Brock learned that war had been declared by the United States. He immediately sent word to Captain Roberts, commandant of a small military post—and the most remote of the North-Western defences—on the island of St. Joseph, in Lake Huron, to try and gain possession of Fort Michilimakinac, a most important post situated at the northern end of Lake Huron and commanding the entrance into Lake Michigan. By the 15th of July Roberts embarked with his force, consisting of a part of the 10th R.V. Battalion, 160 Canadian Voyageurs under the command of Mr. Comford, 250 Indians—only half of whom were armed with fowling-pieces and

old muskets, and two old iron three-pounders. Reaching Michilimakinac on the 17th, he completely surprised the commandant, Lieutenant Hancks, to whom this was the first intimation of the war. He surrendered to Roberts. A quantity of valuable furs and military stores also came into his possession. As this post was in the heart of the Indian country, the taking of it by the British greatly strengthened their influence with the Indians, upon whom they chiefly relied for the defence of the North-West frontier. Much has been said and written by the Americans against the measure taken by the British in making use of allies who on several occasions were guilty of great atrocities, and over whom, when once aroused, they had no control. It seems strange that they should so express themselves, when it is a well known fact that the United States Government tried by every means in their power to detach the Indians from the British to their side. The most flattering promises were made, meeting after meeting was held, but to no purpose. Not all the tempting offers held forth could make them forget the many broken stipulations and promises. They burned to revenge their many wrongs as they saw the land of their fathers swept away from them by fraud and trickery. They flocked to the banner which had ever respected its bond. Had the British refused their services, they would have turned them into foes and increased their own difficulties, for the Americans would have had no scruples in making use of them, as is shown by their employing the few that remained friendly to them.

In the meanwhile General Hull, who had long before the declaration of war been drilling a force for the invasion of Western Canada, crossed by the Detroit River on the 12th of July with 2,300 men about three miles above Sandwich, a small town nearly opposite to Detroit. Here he published the following

PROCLAMATION.

Inhabitants of Canada—After thirty years of peace and prosperity, the United States have been driven to arms. The injuries and aggression, the insults and indignities of Great Britain, have once more left them no alternative but manly resistance or unconditional submission. The Army under my command has *invaded your country*, and the standard of Union now waves over the territory of Canada. To the peaceable, unoffending inhabitant, it brings neither danger nor difficulty. I come to find enemies, not to make them. I come to protect, not to injure you.

Separated by an immense ocean and an extensive wilderness from Great Britain, you have no participation in her councils, no interest in her conduct. You have felt her tyranny, you have seen her injustice; but I do not ask you to avenge the one or redress the other. The United States are sufficiently powerful to afford you every security consistent with their rights and your expectations. I tender you the invaluable blessings of civil, political and religious liberty, and their necessary result, individual and general prosperity—that liberty which gave decision to our councils and energy to our conduct in a struggle for independence, and which conducted us safely and triumphantly through the stormy period of the revolution; that liberty which has raised us to an elevated rank among the nations of the world, and which has afforded us a greater measure of peace and security, of wealth and improvement, than ever fell to the lot of any country.

In the name of my country, and by the authority of Government, I promise you protection to your persons, property and rights. Remain at your homes; pursue your peaceful and customary avocations, raise not your hand against your brethren. Many of your fathers fought for the freedom and independence we now enjoy. Being children, therefore, of the same family with us, and heirs to the same heritage, the arrival of an army of friends must be hailed by you with a cordial welcome. You will be emancipated from tyranny and oppression, and restored to the dignified station of freemen. Had I any doubt of eventual success, I might ask your assistance, but I do not. I come prepared for every contingency,—I have a force which will look down