

A False Alarm.

A CHARACTERISTIC INCIDENT OF THE "FENIAN INVASION."

At seven o'clock, on a dark, starless night, in the June of the eventful year 1866. The streets of Hamilton were silent and deserted, and the city slept. Yet, at the wharf, and here and there throughout the streets, a light told of the presence of watchers; for it was a time of danger to the Canadian border, and men kept strict watch, lest the enemy should come upon them unaware. And not only that, but the city, even in its young days, was an important place, so widely noted for its enterprise and activity that it had been dubbed "The Ambitious Little City."

Being hemmed in at the back by the mountain, the side open to the bay was naturally the most defenceless, and hence the lights at the wharf. Suddenly these began moving about. What was the matter? Look! The dark outline of a vessel loomed up against the sky. But what of that? There were vessels coming to the wharf at all hours. Yes, but see what she is doing! Her actions were strange indeed. She passed close by one point, turned and made as if for another, then turned again straight for Hamilton. No regular trader made such erratic movements.

Soon the streets about the wharf were all alive. The city bell was rung, and the alarm spread like wildfire that a Fenian boat was coming up the bay. Excitement ran high. Women, barefooted and but scantily clad, rushed, terrified into the streets. One, with an idea that something must be done, buried her silver, and besought her neighbor to put on a wincey dress, for they did not know when they might sleep under a roof again.

While the city awoke, preparations went steadily forward for a stout resistance to the enemy, if needful. The captains of the Sixteenth Battalion and Home Guard, our own brave Thirteenth being away to the frontier, were promptly on hand; forces of citizens, full armed, were stationed at the principal points of the city, the guns made ready for action, and the battalion hastened to the wharf to meet the hostile intruder.

Nearer and nearer came the craft. The report of a gun boomed from the city, then another. Surely that would warn her! But no; she came steadily onward. On, till the soldiers, straining their eyes in the darkness, could fancy they saw the men on board. On,

till they could hear the water splash about her bows. They waited for some sign; but none came. She might have been a phantom ship, so silent she seemed to their excited fancy.

A few moments after and a somewhat discomfited battalion marched back to its quarters. The innocent disturber of their peace was but a lumber tug, which, having lost its bearings while in the lake, had drifted about aimlessly for a time and then proceeded to its destination, the railway wharf. Our citizens, though a little touchy upon having been frightened so easily, had yet gained by this experience. They knew their own powers—had tested them—and better still, had found out "what was best to be done, and what was not best to be done" in such an emergency.

And such an emergency might come. For if Canada were invaded from the water, the little city, now no longer little, nestling between the mountain and the bay, and fronting on one of the greatest of the great lakes, would form a prominent point of attack.

Thus Hamilton might have played an important part in what, at that time, caused such widespread consternation and dismay, and which has been called a great combined farce and tragedy, "The Fenian Raids."

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A Prayer.

I ask not wealth but power to take
And use the things I have aright,
Not yeass but wisdom that shall make
My life a profit and delight.

I ask not that for me the plan
Of good or ill be set aside;
But that the common lot of man
Be nobly borne and glorified.

I know I may not alway keep
My steps in places green and sweet;
Nor find the pathway of the deep,
A path of safety for my feet.

But pray that when the tempest's breath
Shall fiercely sweep my way about;
I make not shipwreck of my faith
In the unfathomed sea of doubt.

And that though it be mine to know
How hard the stoniest pillow seems;
Good angels still may come and go
About the places of my dreams.

I do not ask for love below
That friends shall never be estranged;
But for the power of loving so,
My heart may keep its youth unchanged.

Youth, joy, wealth, fate, I give thee these!
Leave faith and hope till life is past,
And leave my heart's best impulses
Fresh and unailing to the last.

P. C.