

CANADA—A BALLAD IN THREE PARTS.

Dedicated (by permission) to the Right Honourable the Earl of Dufferin, K.P., K.C.B., Governor-General of Canada.

PART THE FIRST.

While yet the river roll'd, unnam'd, its courses to the sea,
The red-man roam'd upon its banks as fanciful and free,
His wigwam in the dewy eve sent up its curling smoke,
And in the light of happy morn his peaceful slumber broke.

Bathing his brown limbs in the sun, whose rising spirit drew
His upward prayer along its rays to heaven's illumin'd blue—
"Great Spirit hear," he said, "my wish to send us plenty food,
For small papooses all and squaw, while me go hunt the wood.
Then throwing what remained of robe beside his birch canoe,
He, plunging in the sparkling wave, its crystals backward threw.
But suddenly a tremor seized those limbs that ne'er had quail'd,
And clammy sweats, with icy chill, that iron frame assail'd.

"Great Spirit, what is that," he cried, "far yonder on the sea,
Like mighty bird, with stretching wings, and flying fast to me?
Back, back to shore, his brawny arms struck their imploring course,
And beck'ning to his busy mate—with speechless tongue and hoarse—
By gesture and outstretching arm, he caused her, frighten'd, to see
The source of his profound alarm—the winged mystery.

All day they watch'd the spreading sail come flapping o'er the deep,
And, crouched in voiceless wonder, saw the image on them creep—
Till evening brought it to the vale where rear'd their lowly cot,
When something foaming from its side, like huge harpoon was shot:
While, folding close its mighty wings, a loud tremendous roar
In rolling thunder woke each cleft along the wooded shore,
Then from their hiding place came forth the forest children dumb,
In terror "whispering with white lips"—behold! Great Spirit come!
And trembling on the pebbled beach awaited, still, to hear
What the Great Spirit more would say—now, unto them so near—
When lo! a lesser vision, from the larger one, they saw,
Fly forth with foaming crest along, and bound upon the shore.

Approaching, men of warlike mien made signs to them to come
And take the proffer'd offerings into their pointed home;
But fearful of the stranger's gaze and gifts brought from afar,
The Indian, turning to his camp, cries "na-da, Ca-na-da!"

Fear quell'd at length, and friendship crown'd with quaffing of the cup,
From calumet, in fumes of peace, their vows to heaven went up!
When the chieftain of the pale faced men cried out with lofty song,
Remembering 'twas on that Saint's day, Saint Laurent!
And ever to his dying hour, when other red-men throng,
That Indian, pointing to the stream, cries—Laurent!
And the white-men landed on its bank, this new discovered star
Among the kingdoms of the earth, proclaimed fair CANADA!

PART THE SECOND.

The flowing tide of years roll'd on unnumber'd to the sea
Whose tideless wave engulfs all time amid eternity;
And faces pale, like autumn leaves, grow thick upon the strand,
Once people'd only by the race of the red Indian band;
While vessels, from the mighty deep, in crowds the river deck,
And waken, with saluting roar, the fortress of Quebec.
Proud soldiers, gay, with martial tread, the maidens lead in dance,
And whiten'd folds of lilies spread the banner-flag of France—
"The chosen home of chivalry, the garden of romance!"

Great statesmen foster'd near the Throne, had greater grown abroad,
And martyr'd soldiers of the Cross, had perch'd their risen Lord,
Foul war may blacken other climes, and harrow other soils,
But broad St. Lawrence rolls between New-France and such turmoils,
And perch'd upon her eyrie, like an angel in the sky,
Quebec looks down upon the foe, with stern, defiant eye!

Wolfe saw, and flash'd the challenge back upon entrenched Montcalm,
And scaling o'er the diamond ridge which echo'd war's alarm.
Those heroes, dashing 'mid the fray, each thought the field was won—
Then sank in death at close of day, calm as its setting sun.
Fame's brightest rolls the names of both—of Wolfe and Montcalm—bear,
And years with new-born gems adorn the coronets they wear.

Though the triumph of Old England's arm then shook out in the sky
The red cross of St. George above where the Lily used to fly,
For aye may French and English sons, sworn friends unto the death,
Their native land, united, hail with every living breath—
And ever make against the foe one holy, common cause,
To guard the sacred treasure of their freedom and their laws!
And if the tyrant of the East, with others like, conspires
To raise his blood-red hand against the kingdom of our sires,
May every child of Canada rush, should the parent call,
To aid their glorious mother-land, or round her standard fall!
Although in death, with pallid brow, his lips cheer for the Queen
And England's Empire—like of which the world hath never seen—
Around, attending angels wait his last expiring sigh
Then hear, with aureole crown'd, the hero's soul on high!

PART THE THIRD.

"Peace hath her victories as war," and peace hath conquered now
The fertile plains of Canada, by the triumphs of the plough;
And houseless men with foodless babes, upon her virgin soil
Have found a shelter and a home where bread rewards their toil.

And Commerce on exploring ways, increasing yearly, brings
Vast throngs of husbandmen to fill the womb of coming springs.
To pilgrims in the wilderness, each hearthstone lighted new,
Unfolds the paradise of home, with that of Nature's view:
And corn, and grain, and forest-trees, the harvest-bearing river,
While open to the sea, floats on ward, onward ever—
To help to shelter and to feed the toiling ones at home—
The pledge of food and honest work, if hitherward they come.

No gilded rank of pedigree abashes manly brow;
But honest sweat, like diamonds set, sparkling behind the plough,
Prove truer jewels on the crown, whose richness doth instill
The bosom of our mother earth with fructifying skill.

No musty parchments foul with age, or fouler far with crimes,
Doom children of our soil to dwell in sickly, crowded climes—
While Earth's broad acres laughing lie beneath the golden sun,
 wooing the loving hands of toil their fruitful breasts upon;
And rank, worth taking, is as free, to all, as is the wind—
The rank which bears the stamp of God—the PEERAGE OF THE MIND!

The sapling to the tree hath grown, and now strikes out its root
In broad and deepening strength of hold—Britannia's proud offshoot—
And long may Britain's oaken germs, transplanted o'er the sea,
Preserve in Canada the life of British liberty—
While foremost 'mid the roll of names which helped to usher in
The New Dominion's happy birth, stands that of Dufferin!

No "evanescent eidolon" that haunts our history's page,
But deeply graven in all hearts throughout undying age,
The common Nation, may it prove—Dominion of the good!
And, in its growing years, stand, where Britain has ever stood—
The foremost in the cause of right! Upholder of the truth!

The nation which, with growth of years, grows in the strength of youth!
So may we cry, with hopeful voice, unto the heavenly powers,
For blessings on our native land—"THIS CANADA OF OURS!"

Canadian Spectator.

NENUPHAR: A FANCY.

JUNE.

I am going to call up before you what I consider to be one of the loveliest pictures in that great picture-book that we call the world, and which is always lying open for the eyes of every admiring child of nature to look upon.

A grey, cool summer dawn, lighting up with the hazy, mysterious light peculiar to the dawn, the dark shadows that have slept all night among the branches of the trees; dew-drops lying on every leaf waiting for the sun's touch to convert them into sparkling diamonds. Nothing is to be heard around but the faint chirp of newly-awakened birds,—over everything else the soft hush that seems to prevail in the very early morning, as though the whole world were waiting and listening so as to wake up to life and motion at the first token of the arrival of the Day-god.

At the foot of the trees which grow thickly around it, is a large lake—Wykeham Mere. The marsh-marigolds and forget-me-nots on its banks, as also the alders and tall trees above, are reflected in its waters, and all over its broad surface lie the white blossoms of the water-lilies with tight-folded petals, sleeping away the hours of night.

Suddenly over the landscape, springing from one knows not where, comes a little shivering breeze that rustles the tall tree tops, and even disturbs somewhat the placid waters of the mere, causing the water-lilies to move restlessly to and fro on the baby ripples, and the rushes, that on the one side grow by the water's edge, to shiver and murmur amongst themselves,—a little breeze that is the precursor of morning.

It has scarcely time to give its message, and pass on with it to other lands, ere the clouds on the horizon have passed away, and through the branches come flickering rays of light that wake the birds to a chorus of praise, and cause the water-lilies to unfold their leaves in anticipation; then a few more minutes of waiting, and the dim grey haze has disappeared: no more dreams of night—no more uncertain fancies of dawn: those are alike over and done with, for the day has come—the working-day of stern facts and realities.

Some hours later on, the path that led through the park from Wykeham Hall to Wykeham Mere was trodden by John Clermont, Lord of the manor.

He walked slowly, and leant heavily on his stick, but more through weariness of spirit than infirmity of body; for a tired heart makes tired feet, and Mr. Clermont's heart was indeed sad. Only a year ago he had, after seeking for it over fifty years, found and won for his own, the most precious jewel in the world—at least it had seemed so to him; and now he was thinking of how once more he was left quite alone—only all the sadder and drearier for the remembrance of the brief glimpse of sunshine he had had, and of how at home, in the wide nurseries where he had once, not so long ago, hoped to see a proud

young mother, holding her child in her arms, there was no one but the week-old motherless babe. So thinking, and pondering over the rights and wrongs of a question, the solving of which is so far above a weak human mind, he came down to the water's edge, and stood watching the white moony cups floating on its calm surface; but even in their still loveliness his angry embittered soul could see no beauty.

"Senseless things," his thoughts ran on, "you were just as unmoved, and looked at me just as calmly, a year ago when I gazed upon you in my joy as you are to-day in my sorrow! Cold and white and beautiful, you have not one feeling in common with us! You stand apart in a world of your own, the embodiment of selfishness!"

"There are some flowers," so his fancies rambled on, "one could imagine gifted with a soul, so near and dear do they become to us. Mignonette, or heather even, a scentless blossom, but still there is something that it has about it that is different to—a peony, for instance. But you are of the peony type, I am afraid," he dreamed on, "despite your beauty;" but here the thread of his thoughts was broken, and a sharp cry of utter astonishment broke from his lips, and entirely disturbed his fancies, which had begun to run rather wild, as they were sometimes wont to do; for among the reeds by the water's edge he had caught a glimpse of what appeared at first sight to be a water-lily gifted with motion, but which on a closer examination proved to be a baby.

It was laid in the rushes as in a cradle, safely out of the reach of the water, although the hem of its long robe was damp by reason of its having come in contact with the wet leaves around.

The child was fast asleep, but at John Clermont's touch it opened its large blue eyes and gazed up at him. With many a cry of astonishment and surprise, he lifted it up in his arms out of its unsafe bed, where certainly in its white dress, and with its little close-fitting cap tied under its chin, it did present rather an unattractive appearance.

"I will take thee home, little one," said John his own grief and bitterness of soul for the minute forgotten, in contemplation of the helpless infant in his arms: "for the present, at least, though shalt remain with us; and if in the future no one comes to claim thee, why, thou canst still stay on, and be a companion for little, lonely Heather."

There was much excitement in the nursery at Wykeham at the appearance and romantic history of this new water-baby, and much discussion as to its parentage; for although Mr. Clermont inquired everywhere, and the nurses made no secret as to how and where it had been found no one ever came forward to put a claim in for it.

It was a lady's child nurse Bell, who had been engaged to look after it, declared, because of the delicate laces and embroideries wherewith its things were trimmed; which supposition nurse Beatty, Miss Clermont's attendant, of course thought it her duty to contradict. And as the days went on, and still no anxious father or mother raised an inquiry for the babe, it really seemed at times to Mr. Clermont whilst gazing on the sleeping infant's placid countenance, that it was not altogether impossible for it to have sprung from the same root as its namesakes floating on the waters of the lake; for, as a sort of link with the past, and as a remembrance of how the foundling had come among them, he had given to the child the name of Nenuphar.

Little Heather screamed and cried when on the christening day the sacred drops fell upon her forehead, but Nenuphar only opened her wide, blue eyes, and smiled a sweet baby smile, as if she liked to feel the water; and Mr. Clermont, watching her in the distance, smiled too, for it seemed to him a realization of his quaint conceits and fancies that day he had found her down by the water's side: and from that day forth he took more interest in her than ever, for it diverted his mind from his own sorrow, and he looked forward to something almost approaching excitement to the time when she should be grown up, so that he might see what kind of a woman she would develop into.

And thus it was that Nenuphar gained a name and a home.

A stray sunbeam flickering through the branches of some forest oak may touch and warm some dark spot that the sun's rays rarely, if ever, reach,—a stray raindrop caught on its downward course by a green leaf, may fall from thence to some corner of the earth hitherto barren and unprofitable, and by its cool, reviving touch give life to a seed there concealed, which, springing up as the years pass on, may grow to be a stately tree giving shelter and protection to those who need it; but then, again, the seed having developed, it may prove to be the poisonous nightshade breathing death on those around; but surely for this neither the sunbeam nor the dewdrop can be blamed. They did the good deed—they gave the life for good or for evil; and if the seed be poisonous, the fault does not lie with them.

Which all is a preface to saying that John Clermont watching Nenuphar grow up, sometimes wondered whether all the world, or at least the world that came under her influence, would not have been happier and better if the waters of Wykeham Mere had closed over her head when she lay a sleeping babe upon its bosom.

She was growing up to girlhood fast now; but in all the years that had come and gone, no one had ever arisen to lay claim to her, no one had appeared who either in love or in law wished to take her away from the home which had been

given to her; and Mr. Clermont wondered often as he watched her lazy, languid movements, who and what her mother had been;—a lady, he generally decided, as nurse Bell had done before him,—or else, he would add, smiling to himself, a water-lily! As long as the children were in the nursery Nenuphar remained the favourite; for what nurse can withstand a child who rarely if ever cries—a child who will lie in its bed and gaze calmly and contentedly at the ceiling for as long as the maid requires for conversing with the young man from the baker's? A child of that description is well worth its weight in gold. So what wonder that Nenuphar was often held up as a model to naughty, passionate little Heather, who could not bear to be kept waiting a minute for anything, and would scream and cry, and stamp her tiny feet, if not attended on the moment?

Then her father would come up, attracted from his study by the shrieks of his motherless lassie, and Betty would be reproved, and the child coaxed back into goodness. And Mr. Clermont would go away, thinking that he had done all that was required of him, and wondering if the children were so troublesome now, what they would be when they grew older.

"After all it is only Heather," he would think as he shut the study-door again; "no one could wish for a better child than Nenuphar. It would be an interesting study to watch as they grow up and their characters develop, the effect they will have the one upon the other. It will give quite an interest to my life, that has become of late so sadly devoid of interest." So he thought, almost forgetting that human souls have to be guided into right paths, trained and pruned by a gardener's hand, not left to run wild for the sake of astonishing that gardener by the flowers and fruits they will produce when left alone.

As the children grew older, Nenuphar still continued the favourite with every one, as she had been when a baby with her nurse. And yet she did not do very much to earn that position, and was perhaps not so really worthy of it as naughty, wilful little Heather, who was all tears and despair one moment, and was lifted up into the most wild joy the next.

But Heather was troublesome; always more or less in mischief, and did not care for learning—and beyond a sweet voice, was possessed of no accomplishments likely to do credit to her instructors; so it was not altogether wonderful that her good qualities were rather inclined to be overlooked. Whereas with Nenuphar it was different: not that she was clever—and her accomplishments fell short even of Heather's, for she could not sing; but then she had learnt one great art of popularity—she agreed so quietly with everything proposed; afterwards, perhaps, she as quietly slipped out of it—for she was essentially lazy, and disliked work quite as much as Heather did, though for different reasons. But she certainly managed better.

No one ever heard her voice in dispute, or saw her smooth forehead disfigured with frowns; she had learned while yet very young that it was so much easier, so much less trouble, to say "yes" than to say "no."

"No" involved explanation and arguments, and noise and confusion,—all the things, in fact, she most disliked; whereas "yes" stopped people talking for the time being; and afterwards—well, afterwards—the best thing was to wait and see what would happen.

Wait; yes, that was always the great thing with her. She was never in a hurry about anything; any other hour was just as good as the present: hence her popularity with those about her; for the impatience of a child is often trying to the wider understanding and deeper knowledge of those about it.

"I believe," said Heather, as she stood watching from the window one day a steady downpour that had set in just as the two girls were dressed and ready for a long-promised expedition,—
"I believe, Nenuphar, we shall not be able to go, after all. Oh, what shall we do?"

"Wait," replied Nenuphar, calmly, looking up from the arm-chair in which she was awaiting the result of the storm. "It does not really matter; for if it rains very hard to-day, it is almost sure to be fine to-morrow."

Very philosophical, of course, but scarcely natural in a girl of thirteen; and Heather, who had her feelings less under control, turned away with tearful eyes to the nursery, there to be told not to be so silly, but to look at Miss Nenuphar, and see how much more sensible she was.

As the years passed by, and girlhood gave place to early womanhood, the intense stillness—I know not what else to call it—of Nenuphar's character became less noticeable than when she was a child. She and Heather were always great friends, as indeed was only natural; for they were sisters in all but name, being bound together by the ties of one mutual home and one father's care—for John Clermont made no difference whatever in his treatment of the two girls.

Mr. Clermont was very fond of society, and he very often had friends staying in the house—men friends, that is to say. As to ladies, he had reverted to his old feelings towards the sex,—feelings that had held good up to the time of his marriage, which event had not occurred until he was nearly fifty, before which time he had never been known to speak willingly to a woman,—and to that most unchivalric state he had returned after his wife's death; so, having procured an elderly lady to act as chaperon to the girls, he felt he had quite done his duty as far as womankind was concerned, and might now go his own way and amuse himself.

But there were always plenty of men, and