

sion in the same corps, with which as lieutenant he was present at Ridgeway in 1866. In October, 1876, he was gazetted as lieutenant colonel. He accompanied the Wimbledon team in 1874, 1875 and 1879, and won high distinction as a marksman in this last year, carrying off the Prince of Wales prize of 100 pounds and a badge. In 1881 he commanded the team when it won the Kolarapore cup. He was at Creedmoor in 1876, and commanded the Canadian team which defeated the Americans at long range shooting in 1882. Col. Gibson is president of the Dominion, and has also been president of the Ontario Rifle Association. He was the first president of the Canadian Military Rifle League. Col. Gibson was also president of the Canadian Military Institute for the year 1892. He was in 1873 elected a member of the Senate of Toronto University and has been examiner in the Law Faculty. In 1879 he was elected to the Ontario Assembly over Mr. Hugh Murray, the Conservative candidate, and again in 1883, over Mr. R. Martin, Q. C. He is now Provincial Secretary of Ontario.

NELSON'S CANADIAN ROMANCE

The Hero of Trafalgar in Love with a Quebec Girl.

In the references which have recently been made in the press touching Lord Nelson's visit to Canada, when a young man, I observe nothing is said of the romantic incident connected with his stay at Quebec, at that time, of which mention is made by Clarke and McArthur, Clark Russell, G. Lathom Brown and other of his biographers, and also by the Canadian chronicler, Lemoine. It was in 1782 that duty brought the hero of Trafalgar to the old rock city. His Lordship was then in his 24th year, and had but recently returned from the frigid region of the Baltic, where he had commanded the Albemarle frigate, 24 guns. On being ordered to proceed in that vessel with a convoy to Newfoundland and the river St. Lawrence he expressed his dislike for the employment; his recent experiences making him dread the severity of our northern climate. Nevertheless, on this as on other occasions in Nelson's glorious career, his personal inclinations were made to give way to his sense of public duty.

He arrived at Bic in July, and in due course at Quebec. There he remained for some weeks, when he departed on a cruise along the American coast, and returned to Quebec, on the 17th September, "knocked up with the scurvy," to use his own words. The sickness of his crew compelled him to remain inactive at Quebec for some time, and it was not until October 14th, that he was able to take his final departure from the St. Lawrence. Writing to his friend, Mr. Loeker, at this time, he speaks of his recent cruise as having been an unsuccessful one. "We have taken, seen and destroyed more enemies than is seldom done in the same space of time," he says, "but not one has arrived in port." He adds, "but I do not repine at our loss;

we have in other things been very fortunate, for on the 14th August we fell in, in Boston Bay, with four sail of the line and the Iris, French man-of-war, part of M. Vaudreuil's squadron, who gave us a pretty dance for between nine and ten hours. But we beat all except the frigate, though we brought to for her after we were out of sight of the line of battle ships, but she tacked and stood from us." The M. Vaudreuil here mentioned was probably Charlevoix's pupil, to whom Bibaud refers in his *Pantheon Canadien*, the same who afterwards commanded the *Sceptre* in an engagement with Viscount Hood.

Although Nelson was more than most men susceptible to the influence and charms of "lovely women" it has been surmised that his enforced idleness at Quebec, at the time mentioned, afforded an opportunity for his becoming more severely smitten in that way than he had ever been before, or, perhaps, would ever be again. There have been doubts expressed touching the identity of the lady in the case. While some claim her to have been a Miss Simpson, others have fixed on a Miss Prentice; and others again, on Miss Woolsey, whose brother afterwards became president of the Quebec Bank. The facts disclosed in some correspondence exhumed by the late Dr. Miles, previous to his death, and which were embodied in part in an interesting article on the subject contributed by him to the old Canadian Monthly, point almost irresistibly to Miss Simpson, the first named, as the object of the hero's tender attachment in Canada.

The lady was the daughter of Mr. Simpson, a Quebec merchant, in which city she was born in 1766 or 1767. She was sixteen at the time of Nelson's visit, and is reputed to have possessed not only "marvellous beauty," but likewise mental gifts of a high order. One old lady (Mrs. Harrower) speaking of her, said: "If Mary Simpson was not the most beautiful girl in Quebec, she was, at any rate, the most handsome she had ever beheld." We can well believe this in view of the complete ascendancy she seems to have acquired over the head and heart not only of the young post captain, but of others, including the estimable gentleman who subsequently became her husband, the well known Colonel Robert Matthews, long the Military Secretary in Canada to Lord Dorchester and other Governors, and for some years previous to his death holding the post of Governor of Chelsea Hospital. The climax of Nelson's infatuation is related by Clarke and McArthur in their "Life and Services of Nelson," "When the *Albemarle*, on the 14th of October was ready for sea, Captain Nelson had taken his leave and had gone down the river to the place where the men-of-war usually anchored; but the next morning as Mr. Alexander Davison was walking on the beach he saw Nelson coming back in his boat. On reaching the landing place, the former anxiously demanded the cause that occasioned his friend's return. 'Walk up to your house,' Nelson replied, 'and you shall be made acquainted with the cause.' He then said, 'I find it utterly impos-

sible to leave this place without again waiting on her whose society has so much added to its charms, and laying myself and my fortune at her feet.' Mr. Davison earnestly remonstrated with him on the consequence of so rash a step; 'your utter ruin,' said he, 'situated as you are at present, will inevitably follow.' 'Then let it follow,' exclaimed Nelson, 'for I am resolved to do it!' The account goes on to say that a severe altercation ensued, but that Mr. Davison's firmness at length prevailed with Nelson, who, with no very good grace, relinquished his purpose and suffered himself to be led back to his boat. It is perhaps useless now to speculate on what would have been the consequences to the country had not Mr. Davison's friendly counsel prevailed with Nelson in his reckless infatuation. We have only to erase from the annals of our country the four great naval actions: "St. Vincent," "The Nile," "Copenhagen," and "Trafalgar," to form some idea of our probable loss.

That Nelson did not forget what he owed personally to his determined friend was frequently proved in after years. Removing to London, Davison became a navy agent, banker and commissariat contractor, in all of which positions Nelson's great influence was exerted in his favor. His subsequent history was peculiar and eventful. Davison acquired a large fortune, was the political friend of successive cabinets many differences in which were more than once adjusted at his mansion in St. James' Square. Tempted to try and acquire a seat in Parliament, however, he was, we are told, convicted of outrageous bribery, and imprisoned for a long period; but, on his release—such was the lenient view then entertained of election bribery—he was appointed to important posts by the Government and continued his previously successful career. As commissary general of the forces, and treasurer of the Ordnance, though without salary, he had full employment as a banker, of the millions of money that passed through his hands. Sad to relate, from 1808, his life was clouded with trouble. In that year, an investigation being held into certain commissariat frauds, Davison was tried and convicted of complicity therein and sentenced to 21 years' imprisonment. Nothing is known of him further.

After the battle of the Nile he had medals struck for all ranks, one of which he presented to the King in person, who long maintained intimate personal relations with the ex-Quebec merchant. Writing to Nelson, after his interview on this occasion, Davison relates that His Majesty spoke of him (Nelson) with the tenderness of a father. These medals, one of which was worn by Nelson himself were inscribed on the rim: "A tribute of regard from Alexander Davison, Esq., St. James." It was also the same good friend who after Nelson's fall at Trafalgar, formed the 84 shilling guineas found in the hero's purse into an imposing memorial trophy which may still be seen in the new town hall, Portsmouth, within sight of the old *Victory*, Nelson's flagship, and at the very centre