

OUR CANADIAN PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 117.—LIEUT.-COL. B. STRANGE, C. A.

Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Bland Strange, Inspector of Artillery, Canadian Army, and Commandant of the School of Gunnery, Quebec, is the son of Colonel Strange, and only brother of the late Bvt.-Major Alexander Strange, 2nd Battalion, 14th Regiment—who died June 11th, 1870, at sea, while returning from service in Australia and New Zealand—and first cousin to Col. H. F. Strange, C. B., Royal Artillery. The subject of this sketch is now the sole surviving representative of an old military family of Scotch origin, a branch of which settled in Ireland. In Denistoun's memoirs of the family the Stranges of Balaskie are mentioned in 1352 as gentlemen of ancient lineage and fair estate in the "Eastern neck or corner of Fife"—one of them fell in 1547 at the battle of Fawkeside or Pinky, so fatal to Scottish chivalry, and the son commanded a Scotch regiment in the German wars of the great Gustavus. In 1745 one member of the family raised a company for the Hanoverian cause, while another, subsequently Sir Robert Strange (the celebrated artist engraver), fought at Culloden in the body guard of Prince Charles. Sir Thomas Strange, who rose to eminence in the Indian service, and his sons, distinguished in both services, are the direct descendants of Sir Robert. For the last three generations every male member of this family have served in the British Army or Navy.

Col. Strange entered the army in 1847. He has served at Gibraltar and in the West and East Indies. During the Indian Mutiny he was present at Chanda, Sultanpore, Fort Moonsh-junge, Lucknow, Koorsee, Nawabjunge, Seraijunge, the Passage of the Goomie, and Doodpore, and was highly spoken of by his superiors.

At Moonsh-junge, March 4th, 1858, Lieut. Strange, R. A., assisted by Capt. Middleton, 29th Regiment, and other officers, enabled the Commanding Officer, R. A., to carry off two captured guns under a heavy matchlock fire from the loopholes; on the same day after the Engineer Officer Capt. Innes, Bengal Engineers (now V. C.) was severely wounded in the attempt. Lieut. Strange carried the powder bag to the gate of the interior retrenchment, and (with the assistance of Capt. Middleton, 29th Regiment), fired it.

On March 26th, 1853, at the capture of the Kaiser Bagh, Lucknow, Col. Napier, now Lord Napier Magdala, Bengal Engineers, being Engineer directing the attack. Lieut. Strange with assistance, endeavoured to empty a Powder Magazine in the great square while the adjacent buildings were on fire, an explosion left that officer the sole survivor.

On 20th October, 1858, at Doodpore, Oude, while in command of Right Division Q Field Battery, R. A., Capt. Strange captured two guns and 16 horses.

From 1856 to 1871 Col. Strange was Gunnery Instructor at the Repository Branch of the School of Gunnery, Woolwich.

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ANTICOSTI.

ITS HISTORY, RESOURCES, AND FUTURE.

Dirt, says the sage, is only useful matter in the wrong place. All the forms of human industry are simply efforts to get things, at present misplaced, rightly placed. This is a very bold generalization, it must be admitted; but a statement may be at once very bold and perfectly true, and if this may appear to be the former to the superficial thinker, it will command the assent of all whose cogitations are patient and careful. In fact, every form of human activity, from the most servile to the most dignified and lucrative, is a practical exemplification of the axiom: Is an effort to put things right by removing them from the category of things useless or harmful, and placing them among those of service to mankind. This is obviously true in regard to the mechanical employments by which so many gain a livelihood; it is preeminently so in respect of efforts to colonize parts of the earth fit for human habitation, but only partly peopled, if peopled at all. Such efforts to equalize the distribution of the race, and so accelerate the development of natural resources are in all cases to a certain extent commendable in intent and in most cases also in themselves; and not much less so on account of profit accruing to those who undertake and conduct them to a successful issue. Every effort to make the earth's treasures more abundant and more available by a better distribution of labour, that is, by a more even distribution of human beings, is a conforming to the law of order into which the above cited maxim strikes its roots. Still, in regard to colonization as in reference to anything else the principle must be rightly applied to be true. The philosopher, whose maxim we commenced by quoting, would not have admitted as a just corollary to it that the only thing necessary to make dirt useful is to shift it. Gold thrown into the sea is as much dross as gold in the bed of a stream or the recesses of a mine. It is moved, not utilized. So with human beings. It is not enough to remove them to turn them to account.

Into the question of wise and successful colonization many considerations enter besides that of change of place. If every one were a Robinson Crusoe, and every spot equally favoured by Providence with *El Dorado*, the island of Juan Fernandez, it would be a work of unmixed benevolence to drive the surplus population away from our crowded cities, and send them adrift to seek their fortunes wherever the winds of heaven might waft them. The great thing is to find a place where people can live better than they have been accustomed to do, and this of course supposes something better to live upon. It is claimed by those interested in the Anticosti Company,—of which more will be said presently,—that the project it has undertaken fulfils this prime condition. We premise the statement of a few interesting facts respecting the island with the remark that the object aimed at is simply to give information, and not to serve the Company except as its members form part of the general public. There is no occasion to do so as there is, we understand, no intention to invite speculation, all the required capital for commencing the working of the scheme being already in hand. This remark is necessary as nothing is more vexatious to the reader than to find at the end of a long article that he has been beguiled into reading mere puffery, however skillfully the puffery may be phrased.

The information which many persons—even intelligent persons living in Lower Canada, and even in counties lying far east of Montreal—have of Anticosti, is limited to the knowledge of the bare fact that there is such a place, and a vague idea of its locality. That of others extends somewhat farther, they having, perhaps, while steaming down the gulf, caught a glimpse of its rugged dreary shore, or heard some harrowing tale of storm and disaster in its vicinity. There are few, however, who have the least idea of the vast reaches of primeval forest beyond the grim rocks against which the waves dash in powerless rage; few have heard of the existence of rolling prairies as richly clad with herbage as those of the Far West. That there should be deposits of more or less value is more easily supposable, but few have any conception of their actual variety and wealth. Further, most would be "surprised to learn" that the mainland may yet have to look for its principal supply of one description of fuel to the little island of Anticosti, yet nowhere in the same area is peat found in such abundance or of better quality. The waters which surround the island abound with fish of every description, from the hugest monsters to the tiniest denizens of the deep. At certain seasons of the year myriads of seals bask lazily on the rocks which fringe its shores; while the numerous streams which intersect the island literally swarm with trout, salmon, &c. In a few sentences we have indicated, not enumerated, the resources of the island. Full details cannot be given within the compass of such an article as this, although they are supplied in plenty by authorities whose veracity is less open to suspicion than that of a public company necessarily is. Supplementing what has been already said we may mention that these independent authorities give, as among its natural resources, fossiliferous limestone, as susceptible of a fine polish and as durable as marble; a lithographic stone equal in quality to that found in any part of the world; limestone and sandstone serviceable for building purposes; clay fit for brick-making; as already mentioned, peat, of which there is a plain of vast superficial extent, and in depth varying from three to ten feet; salt springs or ponds; of trees—the tamarac, pine, spruce, balsam fir, poplar, mountain ash; of fruits—the cranberry, gooseberry, red and black currants, strawberry, and many others; of animals—the common black bear, the red, black and silver fox, the marten, the otter, &c., ducks, geese and partridges, while there are no reptiles of any description; of marine animals and salt and fresh water fish—the seal, the porpoise (worth on an average £.5), whale, cod, salmon, mackerel, herring, halibut, hadlock, eels, lobsters, &c. These are all natural products, independent of human effort and ready for human use and enjoyment.

A word as to the geographical position and aspect of the island. It has hitherto been viewed by the modern navigator with as much dread as frowning Scylla and foaming Charybdis were of old. Sadly too often have its shores been strewn with fragments of hapless vessels, which had been freighted with costly cargoes and far more precious lives. But its very position, which now renders it so fruitful a cause of peril and loss should render it a means of safety and a source of comfort to the mariners wearying for "the desired haven," and to whom the kindly glimmer of numerous beacons would be a pledge of coming rest and renewed intercourse with the world he serves.

The question naturally presents itself here,—what has been done to utilize these provisions, to make these desirable possibilities facts? And the answer is—next to nothing. All Europe has contributed to swell the band of pilgrims to the dreary verge of the Salt Lake, where modifying Bishop Heber's beautiful hymn—

"No prospect pleases,
And men are very vile."

We send out colonies to starve in Patagonia. The ill-regulated and profitless labour of the race is, in the aggregate, immense—inconceivable so. Here, within hail of every vessel which steams or sails to our Canadian ports is an island of 2,460,000 acres, rich actually and indefinitely richer potentially, lying undeveloped, unoccupied and all but unknown; a region capable of affording subsistence to hundreds of thousands, yet with bears and the like for its only occupants, "a local habitation" for such "a name," and nothing more. It is a very grim, harsh satire on human short-sightedness and on the enterprise on which our age so vaunts itself. So completely has it been neglected that it might be one of the most sterile instead of one of the most fruitful regions; far remote from civilization instead of within bowshot of it, and cursed with a climate the most unkindly instead of blessed with the most healthy and generous of any land within the temperate zone!

The history of the island may in part account for this curious neglect. In 1639 it was granted by the French crown to an adventurer who had made some important discoveries, but on the conquest of Canada it passed into the hands of some wealthy families residing chiefly in England, in whom the exclusive proprietorship has till recently been vested by succession, the greater portion being owned at the time of the recent transfer by the Forsyth family of Quebec. Efforts had been made from time to time, but without success, to purchase the island for colonization purposes; but by an Act of the Dominion Parliament, assented to on the 22nd of June, 1869, it became by legislation what shortly before it had been made by purchase, the property of a private joint-stock company. This legislation did not render their title to the Island more valid than it would have been without this Parliamentary sanction, or rather recognition; but it will give the enterprise a status which it could not otherwise have had, and will be of great service in the carrying out of the works which the company is projecting.

A few weeks ago we heard of the transfer of the most important part of the Island of St. Domingo, including the Bay of Samana and its surroundings, with large contingent privileges, to a knot of Yankee speculators, in consideration of an almost nominal rental. The details of the preposterous if not roguish transaction are so well known that we need not recite them; and the only reason for referring to the matter is to make the objects of the new proprietors of Anticosti more appreciable by the contrast. What do they propose to do? What has been their design in seeking Parliamentary recognition? Undoubtedly, to a certain extent, to make money enough to secure themselves from risk and give them a fair return for the labour and capital they must expend. This motive, if paramount instead of secondary, would not detract from the merit of their scheme or depreciate the value of their work; and it is, moreover, one with which the public

have nothing whatever to do. The work proposed to be undertaken is manifold, but its principal features may be briefly stated as follows:—

1. The division of the Island into twenty counties of 120,000 acres, each to be subdivided into five townships.
2. The laying of a submarine cable between the Island and the mainland, with which it will have further communication by
3. A steamer, connecting with other lines of river and ocean travel.
4. The laying out of town sites at Ellis Bay, Fox Bay, and the South-West Point, the first named to be the *chef-lieu*.
5. To invite immigration from all quarters, and chiefly hardy, industrious settlers from the North of Europe.
6. To open up roads throughout the Island, and construct five hundred log-houses, the erection of these being simultaneous with the road-making.
7. To put up grist and saw-mills, stores and warehouses as required, 250 small cottages, three hotels, a hospital, two churches, three school-houses, and an iron factory, with forges.
8. To improve the naturally fine harbours at Ellis Bay and Fox Bay, with docks, slips, ship yards, &c., and construct a breakwater at South-West Point; and finally to build or purchase five fishing schooners, two trading schooners, five hundred fishing boats, four iron screw steamers for whale and seal fishing, one for conveying, at all seasons of the year, mails and passengers between the Island and the mainland, and three propellers to form a fortnightly line to Chicago.

If this ambitious programme of operations can be carried out, the company will have provided for every conceivable material want of a thoroughly organized community, and this not by the slow processes by which human society usually takes shape and provides for its necessities, but with the rapidity which foresight, system, and ample means secure. And the emigrant of any class will find everything in partial readiness for him, and settle at once with the toils of the pioneer reduced to the minimum. The farmer will find his log-house ready, the limits of his allotment defined, roads available, and mills awaiting the fruits of his labour; the fisherman will have boats, tackle, and appliances for preparing his perishing commodity for the market; persons resorting to the island for health, sport, or business will be able to put up at as commodious and well-appointed hotels as they have been accustomed to. Such, we learn, are the works projected by the company, whose enterprise in doing is fully equal to its boldness in conceiving and planning.

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GOSIPS ON POPULAR SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS.

NO. VI.—THE ELECTRICITY OF THE ATMOSPHERE, AND LIGHTNING-RODS.

"Fear no more the lightning flash."

CYMBELINE, Act 4, sc. 2.

The first satisfactory attempt to collect the electricity of the upper regions of the air, was made by Benjamin Franklin, on this continent, in 1752. He raised into the atmosphere a kite, formed by stretching a silk handkerchief across two rods of light wood, and with this, when the string had been rendered sufficiently moist by the falling rain to conduct electricity, he obtained a copious succession of sparks from a key fastened to the end of a string.

Cavallo, in 1777, raised an electric kite repeatedly in the neighbourhood of London, and obtained an enormous quantity of electricity; he found that the electricity frequently changed its character, as the kite passed through different aerial layers, or strata, and, also, that the air always contained free positive electricity, except when influenced by heavy clouds near the zenith.

Experiments with "electrical kites" are, however, attended with some danger, and should be conducted under the eye of experienced persons. The kite has sometimes shocked strongly, and might conduct a stroke. Professor Richmann, observing at St. Petersburg with the insulated rod, received a ball of fire on the head, (on a sudden clap of thunder, which killed him instantly. The index which he was observing was about a foot distance from the insulated rod. It is well to advert to the fact, as a caution to the young experimentalist, to be careful how he proceeds to question Nature in these her more dangerous operations, unless he is ambitious to rank with the martyrs of science.

Perhaps the most ingenious mode of investigating the electric state of the atmosphere in the upper regions, is by means of the apparatus used by M. M. Becquerel and Breshet, on the Great St. Bernard. (See *Traité de l'Electricité et du Magnétisme*, t. iv. p. 110.) These philosophers placed one end of a cord, covered with tinsel, about ninety yards in length, on the cap of an electro-scope, and tying the other end to an arrow they projected it, with the aid of a bow, into the air, and they found that the gold leaves diverged in proportion as the arrow ascended into the atmosphere.

Out of such experiments came the lightning-rod, by the invention of which, Franklin proposed to neutralize the effects of thunder-clouds by furnishing them with an electricity the opposite of their own. He protected buildings with long metallic rods, terminating in sharp points at the top and communicating with the ground. Along these the terrestrial electricity escapes towards the overhanging cloud, and neutralizes it more or less rapidly. Sometimes, during the night tall plumes of electric light are seen shining on these points.

The efficacy of lightning-rods is fully demonstrated by statistics. Mr. Snow Harris, a well-known electrician, reports that out of six churches in Devonshire, with tall steeples, which were struck by lightning, one of them only, that was protected by a lightning-rod, suffered no damage. The church of Saint Mark at Venice, the Valentino Palace at Turin, the tower of Sienna, all in cities where the lightning causes frequent damage, have likewise been preserved by lightning-rods. In a terrible thunderstorm that burst over the city of Strasburg in 1833, the tower of the cathedral was struck by lightning three times in the space of half an hour. At the last stroke the whole pile appeared to be in flames. In many parts of the sacred edifice the lead, copper, iron, and even the mortar were found to be melted and vitrified. In the next year one of the turrets was literally cut in two by the lightning.