

interest, even in cases when the facts are of a nature to merely illustrate his foibles. No apology, therefore, is required to excuse our discussing the particulars at present concerned with all the minuteness which may be necessary to cast a clear light upon the affair under consideration.

The chief authority for the assertion that the lady was Miss Prentice, was the Hon. Wm. Smith, Clerk of the Executive Council, a resident of Quebec at the time when the *Albemarle* lay at anchor in the harbour. He imparted the information to the late Colonel John Sewell, recently deceased at a good old age, with the additional statement that the intended singular marriage was prevented by Mr. Matthew Lymburner, the famous Quebec merchant, and brother of the delegate from Canada to the British House of Commons on the occasion when the Constitutional Act of 1774 was under discussion in the Imperial Legislature. Regarded as a matter of gossip and hearsay, it will not be pretended that Mr. Smith's authority is decisive of the question at issue; nor is it probable that his evidence, on such a topic, was more reliable than that of any other contemporary resident who chose to listen to rumours circulating in the city. If we recollect rightly, Mr. Smith presented, in his history of Canada, several statements unworthy of credit, based upon mere hearsay, which were disproved by their very nature and by subsequent evidence. There was, as will be seen, a Quebec merchant who was Nelson's familiar acquaintance, and enjoyed his friendship to the last day of his life, to whom, and not to Lymburner, on better testimony than Mr. Smith's, is to be ascribed the merit of having proved an efficient counsellor on the occasion referred to. Lamartine, in his Life of Nelson, gives an account of the circumstances, without mentioning the name of the heroine, and it was to supply this deficiency that Col. Sewell, citing the authority

of Smith, gave that of Miss Prentice. Lamartine's account, however, is full of mistakes. He does not give the year correctly, stating it to have been 1786, whereas Nelson, in that as well as the two preceding years, and in the year following, was serving in the West Indies. He also styles the *Albemarle* a brig, instead of a frigate, and erroneously says that Nelson passed several months at Quebec. In short, as to accuracy, no importance can be attached to this writer's statements concerning Nelson's visit.

Before proceeding further, we shall now cite from unquestionable authorities* a few particulars of Nelson's career prior to the time of his advent to Canada, and of his disposition, habits and character, as displayed when he was a very young man.

When Nelson came to Quebec he was just 24 years of age, having been born in September 1758. He had already been in the naval employment of his country 11 years, for he entered it at the early age of 13; but during that comparatively short time had seen more varied service, and afforded more proofs of courage, nautical skill, sagacity and fitness for command, than the great majority of his seniors in the profession. He had served in almost every part of the world frequented by British cruisers—the Arctic Ocean, the East and West Indies, the coasts of North and South America, the Baltic, North Atlantic and Mediterranean Seas. Although in those days promotion was very slow, except in rare cases, such were young Nelson's zeal, enthusiastic attention to all his professional duties, and extraordinary promise, that he attained the rank of

* The chief of these, here alluded to, is 'The Life and Services of Horatio Viscount Nelson,' (from his own manuscripts and very extensive collections of letters, official and other documents, and communications contributed by the Duke of Clarence, Admiral Earl St. Vincent, Lord and Lady Nelson, Lieut.-Governor Locker, Admiral Lord Hood, Lord Keith, Sir T. M. Hardy, Mrs. Alexander Davidson, and by many other officers and gentlemen)—edited by the Rev. I. S. Clarke, F.R.S., Librarian and Chaplain to George Prince of Wales, and John McArthur, Esq., LL.D., Secretary to Admiral Lord Hood.

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