



THE BARRACKS.—BACK VIEW.

## HISTORIC CANADA, VII.—ILE-AUX-NOIX, III.

HISTORIC CANADA, VII.  
Ile-aux-Noix.

## PART III.—UNDER THE BRITISH.

The next incident connected with Ile-aux-Noix was very unsatisfactory, if not disgraceful. The result of the second attack on Plattsburg and the American fleet shows how official blundering can inflict greater loss on its own side than a powerful enemy.

"During the summer of 1814 each party strove to out-build the other. The Americans being quite at home got 'a formidable force equipped before the principal vessel of the British was even off the stocks. This vessel, named 'the Confiance, was launched at Ile-aux-Noix on the 25th 'of August.' The fleet then consisted of one ship, one brig, two sloops and ten gunboats, the Confiance carrying 270 men and boys, the whole naval force of the British amounting to 1,426 tons of shipping, guns aggregating 765 lbs., and 710 men and boys. I quote these details from James, as before, on account of the incorrectness, to put it mildly, of the American narratives.

On September 10th Sir George Prevost ordered an attack on Plattsburgh, which was to be supported by the land troops, and the next day, "with the carpenters still working at her, and half finished as she was, the Confiance, accompanied by the other British vessels, stood into the 'enemy's bay.' The American fleet was about the same as ours, numerically, but otherwise much stronger, carrying guns aggregating 1,194 lbs, their tonnage amounting to 2,540, and manned by 898 seamen, besides detachments from the 6th, 15th and 33rd regiments of infantry, acting as marines.

Prevost instead of responding to the signals of the fleet to co-operate, according to his own previous instructions, ordered the troops to cook their dinner. Meanwhile one of the British sloops struck a reef, Capt. Downie, of the Confiance, was killed early in the action, and the ship itself, owing to its unfinished condition, could not be manoeuvred readily enough to bring all its guns to bear as required; seven of the gun-boats, which were only manned by landsmen, as our naval author takes care to tell us, disgraced themselves by flight, leaving six of our vessels to receive the fire of the American fleet and forts.

After an action of 2 hours and 20 minutes and a loss of 129 killed and wounded on our part (over 18 per cent. of the whole force) the Confiance, the Linnet (brig) and the Chub surrendered. The Finch, which ran aground, and the Chub were the two prizes captured from the Americans the year before at Ile-aux-Noix.

Active hostilities ceased soon after this action and peace was finally restored by the treaty of Ghent in December.

This post continued to be garrisoned until the withdrawal of the British troops by the Gladstone government, the garrison being reinforced during part of the Fenian excitement by a detachment of the Montreal Garrison Artillery.

The photographer has done his work so thoroughly that there is no need to describe Fort Lennox as it stands today.

But, if I may be allowed, I wish to enter a protest against such a valuable property being destroyed through sheer neglect. Whether it will ever be of great military

importance again or not is a matter for military experts to determine, though military experts are not always infallible when it comes to prophesying. In the meantime it will suffice to remember that when Ile-aux-Noix fell into the hands of an invader, the same fate befell Montreal; and when Ile-aux-Noix proved to be "too hard a nut to crack," Montreal was safe.

It is not now a question whether it would be wise to expend thousands or millions in fortifying it, but whether the thousands or millions which have already been spent there should be utterly thrown away and lost.

When I was there the *one* pensioner, who constituted its whole garrison, was doing what he was able to check decay and delapidation, opening doors and windows in warm, dry weather, and shutting them against the cold and damp, but in spite of his efforts the blue mould was getting in its work, just as it did at the Levis forts, until a penny-wise pound-foolish government was forced to spend a few dollars on coal and stoves so as to keep them dry. Our government "by the people, for the people, &c." seems to have millions for railways of doubtful utility, and is generous with superannuation funds for the benefit of political hacks, but when it comes to spending a few dollars to keep in repair military works that have cost enormous sums, then we are so dreadfully economical that we cannot afford it.

To "jack-up" a few of the key-stones that are in danger of dropping out and to clinch them in their places with iron wedges, and to purchase a few stoves and enough fuel to keep the place dry, would not cost very many dollars per annum, any more than would the pay of one or two extra pensioners to assist the garrison of one.

Even were it certain that the place will never be needed for defence again it would be worth preserving as an historical monument, almost equal in interest to the fort at Chambly, for the restoration of which the Government did make a grant. But its chief claim is on the score of utility and real economy; its position in regard to Lake Champlain is that of the stopper to a bottle. We have found it exceedingly convenient to cork up that bottle in the past, and may, on some future occasion, need to do so again. Providence and the Mother Country have placed that stopper in our hands, and we would be very silly to throw it away. The millennium has not come yet, and so long as we are spending \$900,000 or a million a year on our volunteers, it would be very inconsistent to allow our forts to fall into decay.

R. C. LYMAN.

## WOMAN'S DOMAIN.

In October and the first part of November there is a lull between the summer and the winter gaieties, but with the advent of December our city once more awakes to the gay, social life for which it is noted. So far, the season promises to be an unusually brilliant one, and our leaders of society are preparing for the round of balls, dinner-parties and five o'clock teas, though the last named is giving place to a newer fad—that of an afternoon dance—which is to commence at four o'clock and end at seven. Dinner dress is the correct thing, so as to be ready at the close for any dinner engagement.

One or two large children's parties are upon the tapis for the holidays—genuine old-fashioned parties—such as our grandmothers love to talk of. These have been planned to be, as much as possible, on the same model, and no doubt the children will thoroughly enjoy them, and not the children only, but those who are happy enough to have an invitation to help to amuse them. Those who can enter into the fun and frolic confess that it has been every whit as pleasant to them as to the little ones, and is a change from the formalism of grown-up parties. If you wish to keep your heart young and free from the cynicism of the world, associate with the young, enter into their life and innocent gaiety.

December is also the month *par excellence* for what some, especially the sterner sex, have designated as "those dreadful bazaars." These declare, with a good deal of truth, that their wives spend half their time in making things, only to buy them in again. Many of our churches have abandoned bazaars altogether substituting in their stead the giving of money, and really it is surprising how well it has worked. A good many declared, when it was proposed to do away with bazaars, that the people would not be willing to give money, but the churches that have adopted the plan find that they make as much, if not more, and without the amount of trouble that the bazaar entailed. At a recent meeting held at Rideau Hall in connection with the Institution for Trained Nurses, at Ottawa, to discuss how it would be best to meet the expenses of furnishing the institution, Her Excellency Lady Stanley expressed a strong disapproval of raising money by means of bazaars for any charitable object.

No doubt, in a few years more, bazaars and fancy fairs in connection with churches will be a thing of the past. The minister, who lately had to have the arrears of his salary paid through the means of a series of tableaux, etc., must long for his parishioners to adopt the tenth-giving plan.

The bazaar of the season was that held at the Armory in aid of the building. Seldom has there been seen a more fascinating and beautiful sight than that presented in the Victoria Armory, which was transformed into a great eastern mart, where a variety of goods, suitable for holiday gifts, were displayed. But though some of these were most gorgeous the great attraction was the fair dames and maidens who officiated at the stalls, making in all one of the prettiest and most delightful gatherings Montreal has had for some time. A description of the fair appears in this number.

Our first snow-fall has seemingly come to stay, greatly to the delight of those who dislike a green Christmas. The display of holiday gifts in the shops is this year even richer and daintier than ever. And one wishes for the purse of Fortunatus to invest in the many lovely articles that meet the eye. Both the Chinese and Japanese stores are showing some rare and lovely goods from their different countries. In the former a very beautiful set of China is displayed. Messrs. Sharpley and Sons have a very fine display of Royal Worcester China, which is very beautiful, and offers a tempting inducement to the Christmas buyer. A very rich and varied assortment is also to be seen at Messrs. Birks & Co., and no one need go away unsatisfied.