

ST. HELEN'S ISLAND.

I.

In full view of the city of Montreal, within easy range of sling or arquebuse, lies St. Helen's Island, which may be pronounced, without exaggeration, the most beautiful pleasure ground on the American continent. It combines within itself a number of attractions which cannot be found elsewhere. Whether we consider its historical associations, its picturesque scenery, its healthy location, its easy access, or the important future reserved to it, in connection with the commercial expansion of the metropolis of Canada, we cannot too highly prize its acquisition by the city as a place of public resort. The writer, who assisted at its inauguration as a park in the early summer of 1873, and who has been a constant visitor to its shores in every successive season, has been so impressed with this fact that he judges it only right to make known the beautiful river park to the readers of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS in all parts of the country.

The island derives its name from Hélène Boulé, the handsome young wife of Champlain. It is asserted by some that the founder of Quebec designated it thus merely as a compliment to her on his first visit to the village of Hochelaga, in 1620, but others declare that he became the first proprietor of the island, the purchase money being furnished from his wife's dowry. Hélène Boulé was only twenty-five years of age when she came to Canada, and after the death of her illustrious husband, she returned to France, where she spent the rest of her days in the solitude of a convent.

In 1688, after the establishment of Montreal, the island having become a property of importance, it was included, by letters patent of the King of France, in the seigniorie of Longueuil, and thus became associated with the illustrious family of the Lemoynes, whose fame has been made world-wide by the exploits of the two brothers—Iberville, the founder of New Orleans, and Bienville, the father of Mobile.

Later, the direct male line of the Longueuil seigniors having died out, the domain of St. Helen's Island passed into the hands of Colonel Grant, of Blairfinnie, who married the last baroness. They both inhabited the island for some years, and our old residents still remember a number of anecdotes about them.

During the early times no precautions were taken to fortify St. Helen's Island. The only enemies which the colony of Montreal had to encounter were the Iroquois, and their hostile expeditions generally came from the land side.

During the great war of 1759-60, which resulted in the conquest of Canada, St. Helen's Island was used as a strategic point of importance, and the ruins of the old French fortifications, commanding the rapids at the foot of the current, are still visible to some extent; but we have no information which would lead us to infer that the batteries there planted were ever brought into action.

In connection, however, with this memorable war, there is a dramatic incident of which the island was the theatre. It may be regarded as the last episode of the French defeat. After having fought with Montcalm at the Plains of Abraham, in September, 1759, the Chevalier Levis rallied the remnants of the French army and gave Murray battle at St. Foye, in April, 1760, winning a brilliant victory. But Murray retreated into Quebec, closed the gates, and with the arrival of the fleet from England, a few days later, was enabled to bid his conqueror defiance. The brave Levis was then obliged to retreat to Montreal, where he found everything in confusion, and where, several weeks later, Vaudreuil, the Governor of the Province, signed the celebrated treaty which handed over Canada to the dominion of Great Britain. Levis strove hard to obtain for his army the honours of war, which, considering their valour and misfortunes, the English general should have granted; but, not succeeding in this, he withdrew sullenly to St. Helen's Island. There, on a dark night, a sublime scene was enacted, a fit subject for an historical picture, which some of our native artists should undertake to paint. He caused a great fire to be lighted in the centre of the island, and, gathering his troops in the surrounding gloom, ordered the standards to be brought forward. Then, drawing his sword as a signal, the work of destruction began. After a military salute, and amid the shedding of many tears, the staffs of the battle flags were snapped, the silken emblems torn from their fastenings, and the whole was thrown upon the funeral pyre. In a moment the flames had consumed everything. The army of Levis, on the dawn of the next day, was a prisoner, but all its trophies were consumed.

II.

During the American invasion of Canada, in 1775-76, St. Helen's Island figured on only one occasion. It was in the beginning of November of the former year, when Governor Carleton, afterwards Lord Dorchester, attempted to cross from Montreal to the vicinity of Longueuil in boats, in order to march to the assistance of St. Johns, which was then on the point of falling into the hands of Montgomery. On reaching the south shore of the St. Lawrence, Carleton was suddenly confronted by a body of Continental troops, who had advanced in that direction, after the capture of Chambly. So great was the surprise that his troops were thrown into confusion, and he had to beat a hasty retreat. For greater safety, many of his boats rowed directly to St. Helen's Island, where they were out of

reach of the American musketry, and where the men could take shelter in the dense woods until they were quietly transported back to Montreal.

In 1807, when a war with the United States was again looming up, Great Britain realized the importance of the island as a strategic base, and acquired the possession of it from the Longueuil family. Several redoubts were then built upon it, and notably the blockhouse on the highest part of the island, which exists to this day.

It was at this epoch also that the present barracks were built, as also the powder magazine, store-house, and military prison. From that time downward the island was a post of the Montreal garrison, and was always a favourite residence for officers and their families. In the fifty ensuing years, some of the highest names on the army annals of Great Britain were connected with the beautiful little island.

In later days the grounds were used for target practice, and every regiment in turn spent weeks there for the purpose of going through this exercise.

In 1870, His Royal Highness Prince Arthur spent a fortnight there with his battalion.

When the troops were withdrawn from the country, six or seven years ago, the island became the property of the Dominion Government, and was devoted exclusively to militia purposes. There one of the companies of the Red River Expedition went into garrison after returning from the North-West. Since then a detachment of the well-known B Battery has been stationed there. A disastrous fire destroyed a portion of the barracks last year, but sufficient remains for all practical purposes.

In 1873 the island was ceded to the city, under certain conditions, as a pleasure ground. The soldier has disappeared, the cannon is silent. Nothing remains but the military traditions of the island, but the military works are fenced in from the rest of the grounds, and if necessity should arise, the batteries on the north-west elevation may still be brought into requisition.

JOHN LESPERANCE.

JOTTINGS FROM THE KINGDOM OF COD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "QUEBEC PAST AND PRESENT."

VI.

TWO INVASIONS.—THE LOBSTER AND SALMON QUESTION.—ITS PRACTICAL BEARING.

In the year 1775, there was trouble in this Canada of ours; our worthy neighbours, the "Bastonnais" were seized with an irresistible craving to improve our social condition. We were supposed to be flagging, pining away, under a King—longing for the freedom, more properly, the license a republic brings among other blessings. The grand panacea to cure all our colonial evils, was republican institutions. How much suffering from cold—fatigue—hunger; how many privations, our trusty and well beloved cousins endured in their disinterested efforts to regenerate Canada, I shall not here rehearse; the dismal tale I have unfolded elsewhere. The invasion of 1775 was a *fiasco*—a very complete one; it did not pay.

One century later, the Province, at least that portion watered by the *Baie des Chaleurs*, is again invaded; our intelligent neighbours, this time not devastating our farm or poultry yards—no homes, except those of the lobsters and salmon, are to be invaded: our good friends are not come to regenerate us, but to enrich themselves—this second invasion will pay.

Until last fall, the New Brunswick side of Baie des Chaleurs was studded with lobster and salmon establishments, worked by 'cute Americans, intent on teaching the Blue-Noses how much hidden wealth lies imbedded, unrevealed, profitless in the river St. Lawrence. They fished—they netted—they trapped every living thing the beach possessed, having the shape of a lobster, "provided it was nine inches long," without despoiling salmon. For some cause or other the Americans have crossed the bay to the Canada side, where they leased fishing grounds and built thereon factories; at the present moment, they are spreading in all directions hard cash. American companies have now at least five fishing stands on the Canada side, in addition to their chief place of business and export, New Mills, Near Dalhousie, N.B. Their spirit of enterprise has found vent at Carleton, Marie, Caplan, Bonaventure, and within a few weeks, at Port Daniel, twenty miles lower than the great emporium of trade, Paspbiac. This latter establishment I was shown over, by the worthy mayor of Port Daniel, who seemed to take a most legitimate pride in this new source of prosperity for the municipality over which he has presided as Mayor for the last thirty years. I shall have a word to say hereafter about this enlightened civic magistrate.

The canning of lobsters and salmon at Port Daniel is worthy of some notice. The factory, a plain wooden building, provided with chimneys, ovens, ventilators, hydraulic power, etc., is 100 feet by 30—on a small point formed by a brook, whose water is pumped in the building. The internal management seemed admirable as to system, time and economy;—no useless gossiping allowed; no profane language; men, boys, girls, each at their allotted task. Naturally the lighter duty devolves on the young girls, who get 40 cents per day; the full grown men get from \$20 to \$30 per month, according to their experience, knowledge and ability. Foreman, clerk and workmen all labour together; no drones in the hive. When the clerk is

not engaged at figures, he is to be seen with apron on, in the roughest work the factory offers.

Before beginning operations, the "Boss," as he is named, called on the owners of salmon nets, settled in writing with them the price they could sell their salmon at, viz.: 4½ cents the pound; lobsters were to fetch 2½ cents per pound, when the fisherman furnished their own traps. A lobster trap is a strange apparatus. It represents, in shape, the half of a cylinder; light lathes—about three feet long—nailed round the halves of a hoop. At each end there is a piece of net: in the centre an aperture through which the lobster crawls in, tail foremost of course, with one claw lapped over the other; this aperture forms a species of tunnel; once inside it is impossible for the crustacean to find his way out. The companies sometimes furnish the lobster traps, sometimes they don't: when they do, one-third of the catch is first applied to pay for the use of their traps, baited with clams, herring, caplan. On the 8th June instant, the catch for that morning amounted to five tons of lobster, representing about 2,500 individuals. None but fresh, live lobsters are received, and the care with which they are prepared for the cans, and the precision used in making the cans air-tight, are striking. The first boil the lobster goes through is intended to detach the flesh from the shell; when hermetically sealed, the cans are again immersed in hot water and boiled; each vessel contains one pound exactly, and is expected to fetch from 15 to 20 cents wholesale, and 25 cents retail.

The only point on which we cannot chime in with these enterprising Americans, is that of passing off our delicious salmon and lobsters for United States fish, through the printed labels, and trade marks attached to each can. However, if our own folks are lacking in the enterprise necessary to realize profit, from the wealth of our own waters, it would be a kind of dog-in-the-manger policy should we object to their coming in our midst. Success say we to American enterprise! A canny Scot of Port Daniel, Mr. Miller, leased the company this land, as a fish station, asking merely a nominal rent for the lot, provided he was allowed to have all the offal as fish manure for his meadows and potatoe ground. The lobster's offal, as a fertilizer, is said to be unrivalled, and the effluvia arising therefrom, in the dog days, after a while gets to be less intolerable. Gaspesia is the land of loud smells: all know.

All canned fish is removed in boats to a small steamer the company owns. It may be "a joy for ever,"—it is not "a thing of beauty." This black odoriferous craft is picturesquely ugly. It strikes us, it might travel lobster fashion, stem or stern on. However it answers its object and that is the main point.

(1) "The company pays 35 cents per hundred weight, right out of the sea, which will come to about 2½ cents per lb. in tin. The factory during June have put up over 50,000 lbs. of lobster and salmon; it makes shipments every week. At the end of June a schooner took 250 boxes of 4 dozen cans in each box, to the Allan line agent at Quebec, to be sent by one of their steamers to Liverpool; they keep posted in the best markets, whether in Europe or the United States."

W. M.

HEARTH AND HOME.

LABOUR.—Labour, though it was at first indicted as a curse, seems to be the gentlest of all punishments, and is fruitful of a thousand blessings; the same Providence which permits diseases, produces remedies; when it sends sorrows, it often sends friends and supporters; if it gives a scanty income, it gives good sense, and knowledge, and contentment, which love to dwell under homely roofs; with sickness come humility and repentance, and piety; and affliction and grace walk hand in hand.

WORTH.—The name of a country may be obliterated from a map, the deeds of heroes be effaced from the annals of the world—the pursuit of truth can only cease when man is no more; its light may be veiled by ignorance, craft, or cupidity, but it cannot be extinguished. The cities that gave birth to the illustrious philosophers of old have long ceased to exist—yet the immortal works of those sages that have escaped the ravages of time are still fresh and luxuriant, as when their glorious oratory enchanted their disciples' ears.

CHARITY.—If the peculiarities of our feelings and faculties be the effect of variety of excitement through a diversity of organization, it should tend to produce in us mutual forbearance and toleration. We should perceive how nearly impossible it is that persons should feel and think alike upon any subject. We should not arrogantly pride ourselves upon our virtues and knowledge, nor condemn the errors and weakness of others, since they may depend upon causes which we can neither produce nor easily counteract. No one, judging from his own feelings and powers, can be aware of the kind or degree of temptation or terror, or the seeming incapacity to resist them, which may induce others to deviate.

A HINT.—How much valuable and useful information of the actual existing state of arts and knowledge at any period might be transmitted to posterity in a distinct, tangible, and imperishable form, if, instead of the absurd and useless deposition of a few coins and medals under the foundations of buildings, specimens of ingenious implements, or condensed statements of scientific truths, or processes in arts and manufactures, were substituted! Will books infallibly preserve to a remote posterity all that we may desire should be hereafter known of our-

selves and our discoveries, or all that posterity would wish to know? And may not a useless ceremony be thus transformed into an act of enrolment in a perpetual archive, of what we most prize, and acknowledge to be most valuable?

"WE SHALL MEET AGAIN."—Of all the words to conjure with these are the most powerful, and help the soul over the rough pass of absence with the firmest and most consoling touch. Nothing equals them for power of comfort—not even the knowledge that the dear absent ones are happy; and, to those who love truly, they work as a charm on a wound, soothing the pain of the smart if it cannot close the gaping edges. "We shall meet again." Seas may be between the loving, and distance may lengthen time into what seems an unbearable extent; but "we shall meet again" sounds like the far-off voice of the watch-dog when the wanderer is lost in the darkness of the pathless moor or the bewildering depths of the lonely wood. It is a voice that guides him to the safe security of home, and is an earnest of the reward to come when the weary journey is over.

A LITTLE CHILD.—A glittering golden sunbeam, an emblem of faith, love, purity, truth, humility, innocence, and simplicity; little creature of merriment, full of confidence and unflinching, implicit trust, courageous, dauntless, and fearless, the very embodiment of kindness, gentleness, tenderness, and affection; little restless spirit of joy, flitting as a bird, here, there, and everywhere; happy little tyrant and conqueror; a little wingless angel, ceaseless object of care and anxious solicitude; a seedling for good or bad fruit; a gentle and reproving monitor, perpetual reminder that this earthly life is probationary only; a mirror of life reflecting all its various dispositions and tendencies; little messenger from God, a test of our trusteeship and stewardship, a talent to be accounted for; an indefatigable seeker after knowledge; little philosopher, ever questioning "why and wherefore," "cause and effect"; a willing listener and apt scholar, with little ears only too ready and little eyes only too open, and possessing a mind capable of the slightest impression for good or for ill; sensitive and fragile as a delicate plant, easily distorted or bent, and speedily broken; the harbinger of peace; a little physician, healing all wounds, and diffusing comfort; a ray of sunshine on our rugged path, here this instant, gone the next, by its absence rendering darkness darker, creating a void, a blank, a rent in the heart that nothing can fill or heal, leaving behind a terrible unutterable stillness and solitude.

HUMOROUS.

THE most recent case of absence of mind is that of an editor who copied from a hostile paper one of his own articles, and headed it "A wretched attempt at wit."

A BASHFUL compositor, who was an old bachelor, refused to work in an office where girls were employed. He said he had never "set up" with a girl in his life, and didn't like to begin such foolery at his age.

It is said of a very respectable old historic parish in Connecticut that they starved their minister, and are now about to erect a splendid monument to his memory. He "asked for bread, and they gave him a stone."

A MAN ate seven cucumbers, a few radishes, a basket of strawberries, and drank a part of a goblet of water before going to bed last night. To-day he says: "A person has no business to drink water just before retiring."

TWO country attorneys overtaking a waggoner on the road, thinking to break a joke with him, asked him why his fore-horse was so fat and the rest so lean? The waggoner, knowing them to be limbs of the law, replied, "That the fore horse was a lawyer, and the rest were his clients."

A POVERTY-STRICKEN clerk lately applied for a situation to a large employer of labour in the metropolis. "There was no vacancy, and he was curtly informed of the fact. Being of a religious turn of mind, as he was leaving the office he consoled himself with the passage of Scripture, the concluding words of which are, "Hath not where to lay his head." "Don't stand there quodding Shakespeare," said the employer, "I can't give you what I haven't got."

THERE was recently a concert on the skirts of Dumfries, and the audience comprised some amateurs from a mine. In the course of the evening the Paganini of the orchestra stepped forward to play "a solo on the violin." His ambitious selection was the famous "Carnival," through which he struggled with exemplary courage; and at the end he dropped his bow and addle by his side, right and left, and made obeisance, expecting a burst of applause; instead of which his ears were astonished by an exclamation from the back seats:—"I say, fiddler, are ye gaun to be a' nicht tunin' that fiddle o' yours? or are ye gaun to gie us a tune?" Interpreters of classical music to the million, please take the hint.

DRAWING THE LINE.—An amusing story has told of the quick wittedness of a negro preacher who had elaborated a new theory of the Exodus, to wit, that the Red Sea got frozen over, and so afforded the Israelites a safe passage; but when Pharaoh with his heavy iron chariots attempted it, they broke through, and were drowned. A brother rose and asked for an explanation on that point. "I've been studyin' gogography, and de gogography say dat be very warm country—where dey have de tropics. And de tropics too hot for freezin'." De pint to be explained is 'bont breakin' through the ice." The preacher straightened up, and said, "Brudder, glad you axed dat question. It give me 'casion to 'plain it. You see dat was a great while 'go—in de ole times, 'fo' dey had any gogography—'fo' dere was any tropics."

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