

THE CANADIAN CASKET.

NEC DESIT JUCUNDIS GRATIA VERBIS.

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SELECT TALES.

"To hold the mirror up to Nature."

FOR THE CANADIAN CASKET.

THE RIVALS.

The fortunes of war had made them competitors at the shrine of Mars, in times of national hostility; and returning peace revived that rivalry at the shrine of Cupid. The brand of devastation was superseded by the torch of love; the soldier's ferocity had melted into the tenderness of the suitor; the weapons of death and the splendor of martial equipage were laid aside for music, poetry and the decorations of the toilet. Each followed the dictates of caprice in forming his plan of attack upon the fair citadel of a virgin heart, though almost equally ignorant of the worth of that prize and the effectual means of making the conquest.

Young Clare had long been known and esteemed by the connexions of Caroline May; their personal acquaintance had been more intimate than lengthy, though less so than it might have been had not his modesty equalled his merit; and though they knew something of each others real characters, yet Clare unjustly believed Caroline too much under the influence of fashionable vanity; which, though he despised in a man, it seemed necessary to comply with, rather than lack in those attractions borrowed by his gaudy competitor. Arnold, the other rival, was comparatively a stranger in the neighborhood, having recently settled in this country which a few years before he had visited in the character of a marauder—but let us turn to that period.

"We will breakfast in little York, dine at Kingston and sup at Montreal," said the American commander, tauntingly, as he gave orders at midnight for crossing the Niagara, that indelible line of Nature evidently designed for the boundary of two kingdoms. "We will breakfast at little York"—ah! but they stopped at the half-way house for supper, and supped too on sorrow. In drawing up this nice bill of entertainments, the valor of our Canadian pioneers had not been taken into the account; but their unlooked for and obstinate resistance so impeded the

march, of the insurgents that night overtook them within twenty miles of where they decamped eighteen hours previous.

Other circumstances than the resistance which they ought to have expected, retarded the movements of the invading corps. Avarice and insubordination hung like dead weights on the designs of those inflated leaders, who with more experience and prudence might have anticipated the hazards to which they would have been exposed even with the most disciplined soldiers. As it was, too many of their followers broke all restraint, and disgraced their country and her cause by disobedience, desertion and plunder. Such are the degrading effects of war. The man of tolerable principles, in a well regulated society and under the restraints of civil law, too often loses all reserve in the camp, and satisfies his real or imaginary wants by acts at which men of true virtue would blush. And many of their brothers in arms did blush, while their officers remonstrated, when subalterns and privates turned aside from their country's service to rob the defenceless for their own private aggrandizement.

Of these who fled for personal safety, at a moment's warning, and left their unprotected habitation to the mercy of an enemy, the female members of Mr. May's family betook the woods, he with his sons having repaired to the British standard. Scarce had Caroline reached a neighboring thicket, at the margin of which she turned to contemplate the roof that sheltered her infancy, when half a dozen straggling soldiers, who had outstripped the main body, made a predatory incursion into the house. One of these was Arnold, our rival, who little thought that he invaded the sanctuary of her for whom he would one day be as ready to sacrifice his life, as he now was his honor for lucre. Among the articles which fell to his share of the pillage was a golden breast pin of peculiar workmanship and containing several rare gems of considerable value. This pin was lettered with M. C. the initials of the maiden-name of Caroline's mother who on her death bed put the present in her fond daugh-

ter's bosom, where it had since been almost constantly worn. In the hurry of dressing, on that morning of dismay, the pin had been left with other jewels to gratify the rapacity of Arnold and his companions.

Turning to the night scene of these invaders, we find them, after a tedious evening march, encamped near the head of lake Ontario exhausted and disheartened. Their numbers had dwindled away, while the opposition of the backwoodsmen grew more formidable; and they now began to think of exercising something like prudence. Dreading that want of fidelity which had become so manifest during the day, every man was compelled to commit his money and trinkets to a common charge during the night. This treasure was deposited in a bucket and let down in a well over which a centry was placed. Having stationed a piquet guard and taken other precautions the camp retired to needful repose.

At the head of Burlington Bay may still be seen the ruins of a fort, where were stationed a few troops at the time of which we are writing. Intelligence soon reached this fort of the near approach and encampment of the enemy; and before midnight a few regulars, reinforced by volunteers who kept constantly pouring into the ranks, were making a forced march to surprise them. The American camp was chained in slumbers haunted by dreams of disaster, while the tears of evening fell on their unsheltered brows; and the darkness of the night rendered more dense by heavy fog, concealed their danger from the centries till alarm from them was needless. Some of the Americans were awoken by a heavy fire which confirmed many of their fellow soldiers in eternal sleep; and those who were so fortunate as to survive the first fire saved themselves by flight without a feint of resistance.

After the enemy were dispersed, their camp was spoiled and the dead and wounded respectfully disposed of. In this rummage, the well was examined, the bucket of treasures drawn up, and a token of merit conferred on the volunteers by the distribution of its contents among them. The breast-pin fell