

## THE BATTLE IN THE CHANNEL.

## THE RETROSPECTION OF A JACK.

*Dedicated to the Panic-stricken Readers of Blackwood.*

I served as gunner's mate  
When I was twenty-eight,  
That's fifty anno dominis ago,  
And our ship which was *The Spanker*,  
Were a riding at her anchor,  
One Sunday night in August you must know.

I were chewin' of a quid,  
Which I ordinary did  
O' Sundays, for I think it's sort o' right,  
when our gunner—Ben's his name—  
Did quite suddenly exclaim;  
And his exclamation were "Elow me tight."

Says he, 'My jolly mates,  
This here Lloyd's paper states,  
As were goin' to fight them German furl-  
neers."

Whereupon, we tars in spite  
Of its bein' Sunday night,  
Stood up and gave three hearty British cheers

Well, we sailed away to meet  
This famous German fleet—  
Consarnin' which there'd been no end of jaw;  
For in six weeks they had planned,  
And built, and launched and manned  
The finest fleet a nation ever saw.

We had cruised about on Sunday,  
But about six bells on Monday  
When, as smooth as any mirror was the  
water,  
Right out on the horizon  
Rose a cloud as black as pisen:  
'Twas the foe a steamin' down upon our  
quarter.

'Twas all as still as death,  
There was not a single breath,  
But our Admiral wore a smile upon his cheek:  
The foe was on our larboard,  
But right away out starboard  
Was a werry little tiny narrows streak.

A chucklin' werry sly,  
And a winking of his eye,  
Our Admiral gave orders for to run;  
And the enemy gave chase,  
For the Germans, as a race,  
Have a preference for fighting ten to one.

At seven we felt a whiff;  
At eight it blowed quite stiff;  
At nine it was blowing half a gale;  
But at ten the waves ran higher  
Than St. Paul's Cathedral's spire,  
My language to describe the same do fail.

We kept a 'lectric light  
A burning all the night;  
But on Tuesday in the morning about three,  
My gunner up and spoke  
'Darn me if any smoke  
Is a comin' from their chimney pots,' says he

Just then we heerd a shout,  
And our Admiral sang out—  
'Send the signal up to wear about, and close!'—  
Then fore and aft we ran,  
To his post stood of every man,  
And louder than the storm our cheers arose.

We neared them, and took aim,  
And the word to fire came;  
And our volley down the line of battle roared.  
But the German answered not—  
Not a solitary shot,  
But her ensign fluttered down by the board.

We was speechless, pretty nigh,  
As we couldn't make out for why  
The sponge they should so quickly up'ards  
chuck it,

Till Bismarck we espied  
Hangin' pallid o'er the side,  
And Molke sitting down beside a bucket.

All their gunners, all their stokers,  
Lay as flat as kitchen pokers,  
All a groaning from the bottom of their soul;  
For all their precious crew,  
Unaccustomed to the Blue,  
Invalided when the ships began to roll.

And thus the battle ended,  
And the broken peace was mended;  
And William, when at last he ceased to be,  
Died a sadder and a wiser,  
A more circumspect old kaiser,  
And a member of the Peace Societee.

—London Society.

The excess of women in Great Britain, as revealed by the recent census, is exciting much attention. The disproportion between the sexes is 813,162.

## REPORT ON THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION OF 1870.

BY S. J. DAWSON, CIVIL ENGINEER.

[CONTINUED.]

## LAKE OF THE WOODS ROAD.

As already explained, Mr. McTavish, the resident factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, at the request both of the Commandant of the field Force and the manager of the Public Works, conveyed to him by letters (copies of which are on a preceding page) from Thunder Bay, had sent a force to work on the Lake of the Woods road.

The distance remaining to be opened was found to be somewhat greater than the confused reports, received up to that time, had led us to anticipate. The party sent out with Mr. Snow, in the fall of 1858 had not even penetrated to the Lake of the Woods, with their Exploratory lines, and much of the road they had opened up was a mere preliminary track, on which nothing more had been done than cutting down and rolling off the trees. On this Section, the people employed by Mr. McTavish were making bridges over the Swamps; they had also opened a road from the point at which Mr. Snow's roads terminates East of the White-Mouth River to Birch River, and from thence had cut a bridle path to the Lake of Woods but it was mostly through swamp, and horses could with difficulty be taken over it with pack saddles. By this route, one company of the Regular troops, on their return went from Fort Garry to the North West angle of the Lake of the Woods; where they embarked in boats and a Company of Volunteers which had been stationed at Fort Frances, took the same road from the North West angle to Fort Garry.

The Commandant of the Field Force left Fort Garry on the 10th September and passed by land to the Lake of the Woods, where his canoe, with a crew of active voyageurs was in waiting to carry him to Lake Superior.

## THE RETURN OF THE REGULAR TROOPS AND VOYAGEURS.

Was marked by the same good fortune as had attended the advance of the Force from Shebandowan Lake to Fort Garry. The voyageurs who had accompanied the Volunteers were now disengaged so that there was no lack of skillful boatmen and the journey to Lake Superior was rapidly accomplished, under the able management of Colonel Fielden. The weather was delightful and flies had vanished. In fact, throughout the Summer, to whatever cause it may have been owing, there was a remarkable absence of troublesome insects.

To the soldiers the homeward journey must have been pleasant. The boats were light and better manned than they had been on the advance, and it would be difficult to imagine anything more beautiful than the Rivers. Falls and island studded lakes, by which they passed. Autumn had just begun to tinge the forests and the weather was all that could be desired. The Expedition had been entirely successful and they were returning to receive the well merited thanks of their Sovereign and their Country.

The average rate per day, notwithstanding all impediments in the way of portages, was about 25 miles, some days much more and some less. Waggoners were in waiting for the luggage at Shebandowan Lake and the terrible Thunder Bay road which had been greatly improved during the absence of the troops, was but two days easy march. This shows how readily it might have been

passed at first, if the voyageurs, instead of being set to dragging boats by the River, had been kept for a time at work on it.

Many of the voyageurs, at their own request, were paid off at Fort Garry. They had been struck with the beauty of the country and fertility of the soil, and I have no doubt will prove a valuable addition to the population.

I was detained for some time in making necessary arrangements for the construction of barracks, and the progress of the work on the Lake of the Woods road, and only left the north-west angle on the 23rd of September. I reached Thunder Bay on the 1st October, and in a few days saw the last of the regular troops embark on the steamers; officers and men had alike distinguished themselves by unflinching perseverance, perfect sobriety, and all the good qualities which mark the British soldier. A feeling of regard had grown up between them and the voyageurs, and for the latter I can say that they parted with the tried friends who had shared their toils, with regret, and with a heartfelt wish for their future prosperity and happiness.

The steamers having been fully freighted with military stores, &c., the voyageurs could only leave Thunder Bay on the succeeding trips. They reached their homes in safety, and it is satisfactory to know that not a single serious accident occurred, and not a life was lost, from the outset of the Expedition until its return.

The Expedition having been attended with success, I would gladly close this report without referring to blunders which might have led and nearly did lead to, an opposite result; but so much had been said and written of a character to produce an impression, the reverse of the truth, that justice to the men by whose perseverance and toil it was mainly saved from disaster, compels me to draw attention to a certain circumstance which I should otherwise have left unnoticed.

I have already shewn that, on the arrival of the first detachment of the military force at Thunder Bay, the road for twenty five miles was in such a condition that boats and military stores might at once have been sent forward, as far as Matawin bridge. I have also pointed out that any deficiency in the means of transport, occasioned by the detention of a portion of that which had been provided (drawing stores over the portage road), at Sault St. Marie, might easily have been remedied by sending to Collingwood or the settlements in its vicinity for additional horses and waggons.

Soon after the arrival of the first of the troops, twenty-eight boats were taken by waggons over the road to the Matawin Bridge, thus proving that it was not only practicable but quite easy to send them in that way.

In this position, the true plan would have been to set all the available force, both soldiers and voyageurs, to work on the unfinished section of the road, so as to have it completed by the time the boats should reach the Matawin Bridge. But instead of adopting a line of action, so obvious and judicious, the boats, on the advice of inexperienced persons, who, although living in the vicinity, had never been over the country through which the road passes, or had ever so much as seen Shebandowan Lake, were ordered to the rough and rocky roads of the river, while at the same time with exception of a few companies of the regular troops sent forward to aid in repairing the damage occasioned by the fire, the main body of the military force was maintained in inactivity at Thunder Bay, and there it in great part