

THE MASSACRE AT THE CEDARS.

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Nearly one hundred years have elapsed since the Declaration of Independence announced to the world that all hope of reconciliation was over between Great Britain and her revolted colonies, and that the war, which had in reality existed for a year, could cease only by the utter defeat of one of the contending parties. Since that time England has been engaged in deadly strife with more than half the continent of Europe; but even in France the old traditional hatred as well as the memory of more recent conflicts has died out, while in the United States the smouldering embers of strife have been sedulously fanned by the writers of school-books, and grave historians even have compiled weighty octavos—not with that careful sifting of evidence which becomes the judge, but with the heat of an editor writing leading articles for an election contest, and fearful of conceding one small point to the credit of his adversaries.

As for the English writers upon this period, they have, with few exceptions, adopted the statements of the American histories. If they knew of original authorities, they have not taken the trouble to consult them. Earl Stanhope alone seems to have based his work on original documents, and has thus been able, in some measure, to dispel the cloud of assertion which had so long obscured the truth of history. His sober style is not attractive to the general reader, from the absence of those rhetorical flights which enliven the pages of more popular historians.

It has thus come to be taken generally for granted that, in this struggle, truth and justice were entirely with the Congress; and that, moreover, the war was waged, upon the English side, with ferocity and perfidy, but, upon the American side, with calm and forbearing valour. The well-meaning King George has been a butt for the sneers of many who could not understand his sincere and

honest character. That which in others was firmness and perseverance, in him became stupid obstinacy, and upon him has been sought to be placed the responsibility of a war, which was as popular throughout England at the commencement as any war has ever been.

In matters political, truth is not a necessary condition of success. A certain amount of plausibility is required; but, when the popular mind is in a condition of expectant excitement, a small proportion of truth goes a long way. The manifestos put forth from time to time by Congress had that plausibility, combined with the hardihood of assertion which is so invaluable in partisanship. The Declaration of Independence is a document admirable in its literary style. It mingles its modicum of undoubted colonial grievance with a rhetoric so mournful, rising through many flights of imagination to a height of injury so great, that it remains a model of political composition unequalled to the present day.

There are some counts in that long indictment which, as they are connected with Canada, are specially interesting to Canadians. Among these is the clause, "that he (the King) has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions." On reading this, who can fail to conclude that the King was the first to resolve upon the employment of Indian allies, and that the colonists revolted at such an enormity? Nevertheless, it is the fact that the colonies were the first to invoke the aid of the Indians, and it was not until they found that the weight of the Indian alliance was going against them, that they discovered the merciless nature of their "known rules of warfare."

While none but the New England leaders dreamed of war, and long before a shot had