

THE CANADIAN CASKET.

NEC DESIT JUCUNDIS GRATIA VERBIS.

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SELECT TALES.

"To hold the mirror up to Nature."

FOR THE CASKET.

VIOLA.

A TALE OF PATRIOTISM.

The sun had sunk behind the western hills with unusual splendor, and the tint of dun which he left upon an October sky chimed well with the "sere leaf," and the drooping of nature, and when night stole silently in a breathlessness, a portentous silence seemed to reign all around. At this time I was standing upon the heights at Queenston. Every body knows who has ever been upon these heights, what a charming prospect they present to the eye. On one side he sees the distant ranges of mountains aspiring towards the heavens: on the other the little villages that dot so beautifully the long line of the famous "Ridge Road;" and again his eye rests upon that beautiful stream, the Niagara, winding its way to Lake Ontario, whose waters "meet and mingle with the far-off sky." But I said I was standing upon these beauteous heights when night, (a night that I ever shall remember) full of portentous forebodings, spread its dark veil o'er all the earth. It was a time of gloom to my country, for war had displayed her bloody flag, and "red with uncommon wrath," strode with exterminating vengeance across her fair fields. All day I had stood in sight of the two hostile armies, separated only by a river, not sufficiently wide to prevent a cannon ball from doing execution. It had been a day of activity on both sides, and the gleam of steel met the eye in whatever direction it turned.

All was quiet. The evening gun from both batteries had spoken forth upon the stillness, and the sound had died away in the distance with long and repeated echoes. Our sentries

had been set near the height, and when the massy bolt sent its clink to my ear, I knew that it was the gate of the pickets, that closed in all but the guard. I sat me down and gazed upon the heavens—and meditating upon the Omnipotence of Him who had spread out such a scene, slumber crept upon me, and I was transported to the region of dreams.

* * * * * The sudden discharge of a musket from one of the guard, brought me to my feet.—It was answered immediately by another, and in a moment all were stirring. Casting my eyes towards the brow of the hill, I discovered forms in the dimness of the night, as they ascended one by one, and then dropped into the hollow which lies just behind its summit. I knew they were the enemy, and lest the ranks of my countrymen should mistake me in the darkness, for one of the foe, I left the place for my lodgings, to prepare myself to meet the invader in the ranks of my countrymen. I pass over the struggle of that day, and confine myself to that which decided the battle.

Already had the sun witnessed a scene of bloodshed and carnage, which made his orb shrink from the contest—and again he was setting amid thick wreaths of clouds and smoke, which seemed to hang in awful import upon our destinies.—Another, and a last attack was made, and victory crowned our arms.

Just as we had prepared to march forward to battle, there was one joined our ranks as a volunteer, whose youthful and delicate appearance attracted my attention. His limbs quivered with agitation as he entered the ranks, and took his place next to me. I observed his small white hand, as it grasped with a kind of reluctance the musket which he held, and the deathly paleness which set

upon his countenance, as the order to move forward was given. Seeing this, I encouraged him with the hopes of victory, and as he turned to reply his lips moved, but no utterance followed. At the commencement of the attack, he fell—from extreme agitation, but with my assistance he rose again, and during the next round, clung to me for support, though evidently overcoming his fears, and at the third round he became firm and fired with us. The enemy retreated towards the brow of the heights, and the firing ceased. At this moment, we were ordered to charge bayonets, while the enemy was upon the brink. We did so, and hundreds fell from our sight as if an impenetrable veil had been thrown between us. I looked for my friend, and he had fallen upon the ground. On raising him up, I perceived he had fainted. This being the conclusion of the sanguinary conflict of 18—on the heights of Queenston. I handed my musket to a comrade, and taking my friend in my arms, I left the place for my lodgings.

* * * * * In the township of A—, in the year 18—, in the very early settlement of Upper Canada, there lived two families in the bonds of love and friendship. Each succeeding year only added new ties that bound them together, till not only their respectable heads, but their offspring, became united in the strong links of devoted love. It was natural that, while the friendliest feelings existed among the children of those families, that others, of a deeper kind should be stealing into some of their bosoms. This was indeed so. A daughter, whose opening beauties had seen their seventeenth year, found herself beloved by one who had played by her side, from her earliest days—and while she was herself cherishing these tender emotions towards