

OUR QUEEN.

BY WILLIAM MATHEWSON CLARK.

REVERED Victoria, most beloved Queen,  
Whose virtuous life adorns the British throne,  
While rent by grief thy tender heart hath been,  
Think not thou hast been left to weep alone.

When death with all-resistless power came near,  
And severing life's most sacred social tie  
Thy cherished idol to thy heart most dear,  
Transplanted to a fairer clime on high,  
Full many a soul who kindred sorrow bears  
And of life's bitter cup hath drank a part  
Hath felt the anguish of thy falling tears,  
And shared the sadness of thy widowed heart.

That one great sorrow of thy peaceful reign,  
Which cast its shadow o'er thy social sphere,  
With all the ills that follow in its train,  
But prove there's no abiding city here.

When first the tidings of thy lofty call,  
At early dawning reached thy youthful ear,  
First royal act before His throne to fall,  
And offer up thy charge to God in prayer.

And while o'er Europe revolution sweeps,  
And mighty monarchs from their seats descend,  
Thy throne's foundation still secure He keeps,  
And wider still thy empire's bounds extend.

Obedient millions wait for thy command,  
Old ocean's isles in thee their sovereign greet,  
While mighty India bows to kiss thy hand,  
And lays her sceptre at thy royal feet.

Let those who doubt the existence of a God,  
Ascribe thy life to chance or changeless fate,  
Our God, who parts the sea by Moses' rod,  
Our God, who did the universe create,

Whose watchful eye observes the sparrow's fall,  
Whose hand directs the rolling orbs of light,  
By whom our very hairs are numbered all,  
Diverts the deadly bullet in its flight.

Thou art immortal till thy work is done,  
Thou hast from Him a mission to fulfil,  
His hand who placed thee on the British throne,  
Still guards thy sacred life from every ill.

Thy name to each true British heart endeared,  
By native virtues meekly brought in play,  
And thy whole life on memory's mount hath reared,  
A monument that will not soon decay.

That name revered before the world shall stand,  
The tender mother, gentle, loving wife,  
Not only Queen but woman true and grand,  
New lustre shedding on our social life,

Long may the crown of Britain grace thy head,  
Long may thy hand the British sceptre bear,

Long, o'er the realm may peace her pinions spread,  
Beneath the magic of thy gentle care.

And when at last thy work on earth is done  
And other hands assume the reins below,  
May'st thou secure a mansion near the throne,  
And heaven's diadem adorn thy brow.

REQUIRED READING, S. S. R. U.

STORIES FROM CANADIAN HISTORY.

BY THE EDITOR.\*

THE CAPTURE OF YORK (TORONTO).

EARLY on the morning of the 27th of April, Chauncey, the American commodore, with fourteen vessels and seventeen hundred men, under the command of Generals Dearborn and Pike, lay off the shore a little to the west of the town of York, near the site of the old French fort, now included in the new Exhibition Grounds. The town was garrisoned by only six hundred men, including militia and dockyard men, under Gen. Sheaffe. Under cover of a heavy fire, which swept the beach, the Americans landed, drove in the British outposts, which stoutly contested every foot of ground, and made a dash for the dilapidated fort, which the fleet meanwhile heavily bombarded. Continual re-enforcements enabled them to fight their way through the scrub oak woods to within two hundred yards of the earthen ramparts, when the defensive fire ceased. General Pike halted his troops, thinking the fort about to surrender. Suddenly, with a shock like an earthquake, the magazine blew up, and hurled into the air two hundred of the attacking column, together with Pike, its commander. † Several soldiers of the retiring British garrison were also killed. This act, which was defended as justifiable in order to prevent the powder from falling into the hands of the enemy, and as in accordance with the recognized code of war, was severely denounced by the Americans, and imparted a tone of greater bitterness to the subsequent contest.

The town being no longer tenable, General Sheaffe, after destroying the naval stores and a vessel on the stocks, retreated with the regulars towards Kingston. Colonel Chewett and three hundred militiamen were taken prisoners, the public buildings burned, and the military and naval stores, which escaped destruction, were carried off. The American loss was over three hundred, and that of the British nearly half as great. ‡

"How did you get your clothes so burnt?" asked the corporal, when the narrative was concluded, pointing to the scorched and powder-blackened uniform of the narrator.

"It is a wonder I escaped at all," said Sergeant Shenstone. "I was nearly caught by the explosion. I was helping a wounded comrade to escape, when, looking over the ramparts, I beheld the enemy so close that I could see their teeth as they bit the cartridges, and General Pike, on the right wing, cheering them on—so gallant and bold. I was a-foard I would be nabbed as a prisoner, and sent to eat Uncle Sam's hard-tack in the hulks at Sackett's Harbour, when, all of a sudden, the ground trembled like the earthquakes I have felt in the

\*This sketch is taken from a volume by the Editor, entitled, "Neville Trueman, the Pioneer Preacher—a story of the War of 1812," pp. 244, price 75 cents. Win. Briggs, Toronto, Publisher.

†The magazine contained five hundred barrels of powder and an immense quantity of charged shells.

‡See Withrow's History of Canada, 8vo. edition, chap. xxiii.

West Indies, then a volcano of fire burst up to the sky, and, in a minute, the air raining fire and brimstone, as it did at Sodom and Gomorrah. It seemed like the judgment day. I was thrown flat on the ground, and when I tried to get up I was all bruised and burnt with the falling clogs and splinters, and my comrade was dead at my side. I crawled away as soon as I could—there was no thought then of making prisoners."

"But what gar'd the magazine blow up? Was it an accident?" asked old Allan McPherson, the Highland piper, who had listened eagerly to the tragic story.

"No accident was it. Sergeant Marshall, of the artillery, a desperate fellow, who swore the enemy should lose more than they would gain by taking the fort, laid and fired the train. The General had already given the order to retreat, and knew nothing of it."

"God forgie him!" exclaimed the old Scotchman. "Yon's no war ava—it's rank murder. I can thole a fair and square stan up fecht, but yon's a coward trick."

"Ye'd say so," said Private McIntyre, Shenstone's comrade, "gin ye saw the hale placo reeking like a shawmbles, an' the puir' wretches lying stark and staring like slaughtered sheep. I doubt na it was a gran' blunder as weel as a gran' crime. Forbye killing some o' our ain folk it will broed bad bluid through the hale war. I doubt na it will mak it waur for ye, for Fort George's turn mun come next."

"I heard Dearborn swore to avenge the death of General Pike. All the vessels' flags were half-mast, and the minute-guns boomed while they rowed his dead body, wrapped in the stars and stripes, to the flag-ship; and Chauncey carried off all the public property, even to the mace and Speaker's wig from the Parliament House, and the fire-engine of the town."\*

"How did you get away with the despatches?" asked Jonas Evans. "I should think Chauncey would try to take us by surprise, but the Lord would not let him."

"To avoid capture," said Shenstone, "Sheaffe placed the Don between him and the enemy as soon as possible, and broke down the bridge behind him. There were only four hundred of us altogether. Captain Villiers, who had recovered from his wound, and Ensign Norton set out on horseback, with despatches for Fort George; and, in case they should be captured, Lieutenant Foster undertook to convey them by water, and we volunteered to accompany him. We got a fisherman's boat at Frenchman's Bay. It was a long, tough pull across the lake, I tell you. At night the wind rose, and we were drenched with spray and nearly perished with cold. After two days hard rowing against head wind, we made land, but were afraid to enter the river till nightfall. We slipped past Fort Niagara without detection, but had like to be murdered by your sentry here. We might well ask to be saved from our friends."

An unwonted stir soon pervaded the fort and camp. Again the pon-

\*These were conveyed to Sackett's Harbour and deposited in the dockyard storehouse, where they were exhibited as trophies of the conquest.

derous gates yawned and the draw-bridge fell, and orderlies galloped out into the night to convey the intelligence to the frontier posts, and to order the concentration of every available man and gun at Fort George. The sentries were doubled on the ramparts and along the river front. The entire garrison was on the qui vive against a surprise, and was in a ferment of excitement and hard work. Stores, guns, ammunition, accoutrements were overhauled and inspected. The army bakery was busy day and night. Forage and other supplies of every sort were brought in. Extra rations were made ready for issue, and every possible precaution taken against an anticipated attack, which, it was felt, could not long be delayed.

AN AFFECTING INCIDENT.

A HEART-BROKEN woman came into Governor St. John's office with a babe in her arms to beg the pardon of her husband, who was under sentence of ten years' imprisonment for homicide. She showed papers recommending the pardon from the judge who tried the man, the prosecuting attorney, and other prominent men.

After closely examining the papers, he said, "If I were to consult my personal feelings, I should gladly let your husband go, but I am bound by my official duty, and that forbids it."

The woman fell at his feet in a paroxysm of weeping. "Then hear me," she cried, "till I tell you how he came to be where he is: We were married seven years ago. We went —, and there in our little village we were happy. My husband was sober, industrious, and thrifty. By great exertion and self-denial we finally got our home paid for. But in an evil day the state licensed a saloon, and let it plant itself right between my husband's shop and our house. He was prospering so well that he could leave his business in other hands and lose an hour or two without feeling it. He was solicited to enter this saloon, and weakly yielded. Hour after hour he spent there playing cards. One day he became embroiled in a drunken quarrel, and, fired by drink, struck a man and killed him. He was tried and sent to the penitentiary for ten years. I had nothing to live on. By and by the sheriff turned us out of our comfortable home into a rough shanty, neither lathed nor plastered. The cold wind came in through the walls and ceiling. My oldest boy took sick and died. Then little Tommy, my next, fell sick and died. Now this babe in my arms is sick, and I have nowhere to take it. The state licensed that saloon; the state murdered my children; and now, in God's name, I want you to set my husband free."

"I promised I would—and I did," said the governor.

ONLY.

ONLY a little seed—but it chanced to fall in a little cleft of a city wall,  
And, taking root, grew bravely up,  
Till a flower blossom crowned its top.

Only a flower—but it chanced that day  
That a burdened heart passed by that way;  
And the message that through the flower was sent,  
Brought the weary soul a sweet content.