

ENGLAND.

[The following is the reply to the stirring poem in a late issue of the *Vidette*, "The Mother of Nations is Dead," in which England is represented as in a fatal trance, while the thunders of war rolled upon her shores and threatened to engulf her, her people crying aloud in their agony, "Wake, Mother, Wake!"]

Child! I am neither dead nor asleep,
False to my duty, nor false to my trust.
What does it matter to me who weeps,
So that I stand, before Heaven, just?
It may be that I, who seem to sleep,
Shall weep, weep, weep,
But never, unless my cause be good,
Will offer to Heaven blood.

Asleep? Are my cannon asleep, although
Their throats are guiltless of flame and
thunder?

Shall I for every wrong or foe
Tear the ties of the world asunder?
Child! if I did not seem to sleep
All would weep, weep,
Not on Europe alone would be hurled
The bolt that must shake the world

Asleep? Nay! Here I am standing for peace,
Fearing no foe, and trusting no friend,
Hoping to gain out of wars a surcease
Of a war that seems to promise no end;
Cannon and rifles: be your sleep
Deep, deep, deep, deep;
Bloodhounds of hell! be nerveless and dumb,
With your damp-pulse still and numb!

I mourn o'er my sisters tempest-tossed,
O'er the maddened hate and the brutal greed:
Why should I add to the loved and lost
Daughters that weep, and sons that bleed?
The seeds we sow were the grain we reap.
"Weep, weep? Nay! sleep,
Devils of war that slaughter and burn
Till your sleep slays you in your turn.

NARRATIVE OF THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION.—CONCLUSION.

BY AN OFFICER OF THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

(From *Blackwood* for Feb.)

In last month's number we described the advance of the expeditionary troops as far as Fort Francis, and endeavoured to convey to the reader a general idea of the country in the first of the three sections into which we divided the entire distance between Shebandowan Lake and Fort Garry.

The second section begins at Fort Francis where the leading detachment arrived, as previously stated on the 4th August, starting again that same afternoon. A garrison of one company of militia was left for the protection of the hospital, bakery, and depot of stores established there, and to insure our communications being kept open through the Chippewah territories. Although these Indians had been hitherto very friendly, there was no saying when they might give us trouble, particularly if they saw large quantities of that much coveted article flour, stored in their very midst without a sufficient guard to protect it. Indians have great appetites, and are always hungry—and hungry men are more or less dangerous. Our voyage down Rainy River was most enjoyable. As we pushed off from the shore below the falls at Fort Francis, we were twisted round for some time in every direction by the numerous whirlpools formed by the falling of such a great body of water into a circular basin, where it acquired a rotary motion. At one moment a boat was going at the rate of nine miles an hour, and the next was perfectly stationary, having stopped without any shock, but as suddenly as if it had struck on a rock. In some instances minutes elapsed ere the utmost exertion at the oar, the whole crew pulling their best, could import the least motion to the boats. They seemed as if held in a vice by the hand of some hidden giant—the sensation being all the more peculiar from the contrast with the rushing frothing waters

around, in themselves the very symbol of motion. Then after some moments of hard pulling, every muscle being strained to the utmost, the boat was released so suddenly that it bounded forward as a spring would which had been kept back by a rope that had suddenly snapped. The sensation of being in a small boat amongst such eddies, whirlpools, and upheaving waves, which rising from below, broke on the surface in great mounds of water without any apparent cause, was most exciting and enjoyable to the strong nerved man; whilst the weak-headed experienced a disagreeable feeling about the stomach that seemed to give a strong tendency to grasp at something or somebody.

As we glided down this deep river at the rate of about four or five miles an hour, the scenery was very pretty. Its breadth was from three to four hundred yards; the banks were wooded to the waters edge, with here and there a patch of greensward peeping out through the trees; whilst occasionally one came to an open park like clearance, where fine spreading oaks reminded one of England. This river is the frontier between British North America and the United States. There are no settlements upon either bank, but the numbers of lodge-poles, showed that the locality was a favourite one with Indians. From Fort Francis to where Rainy River discharges itself into the Lake of the Woods, a distance of 70 miles in a westerly direction, the navigation is unbroken. There are rapids at two places but they can be run easily and safely: and in ascending the stream, boats are tracked up the stream without discharging cargo.

At both, many Indian families are always encamped, as they are favourite spots for fishing, particularly during the winter, as the water never freezes there. There are wide open spaces at these rapids, covered when we passed with rich luxuriant grass, small spots being under cultivation as gardens for potatoes and Indian corn. There were also some circular mounds of earth, one or two being about twenty feet high. We had not time to land and examine them, but the natives call them underground houses although not used as habitations.

It was a lovely day, and as there was a good current in the river, we determined upon trying the plan of drifting along it during the night. So after the evening meal, we again started, lashing the boats together two and two, one man remaining awake in each boat to steer, the others lying down to sleep as best they could. As the sun went down, a dense mass of curious looking flies came streaming up with the gentle westerly wind. They were nearly white, with grey wings and pale yellow bodies, having a tail more than an inch long consisting of what looked like two white hairs. They flew in a regular column, closely formed up without any stragglers to the right or left, which opened out with a sort of tactical regularity when a boat pushed into its midst. At a little distance they had all the appearance of a driving fall of snow. The pressure from above caused vast numbers of them to strike the water from which they had not the power to rise again.

We had not been many hours drifting along when black clouds came up and hid the moon, the wind freshened and brought heavy rain with it, which soon wet us through. We were making no way, and it became so pitchy dark that steering was impossible. We had therefore to push into shore, and await daybreak as best we could.

We reached the mouth of the river next day in time for breakfast at a small Hudson Bay post, formerly called Hungry Hall, from

the number of men who had from time to time nearly died from starvation whilst quartered there. It has now been renamed Fort Louisa by the company, and it is expected, will become shortly a post of importance, being so advantageously situated upon what will henceforth be, until a rail way is opened, the highway for North-western emigration. Close to the post is an Indian burial-ground, where there were some coffins raised in the air on platforms about six feet high; chiefs only and their sons are thus honoured after death. Around the post are many Indian potato gardens; but there were very few families there as we passed, every one that could being away from the ordinary hunting grounds at this season, for the purpose of collecting wild rice, which abounds in some neighboring locality.

In every part of Rainy River sturgeon are found in great abundance one of fifty, sixty or more pounds being no extraordinary fish. It is very good eating, and is a great staple of food amongst the poor half-starved Indians.

The land upon each side is low and marshy at the mouth of Rainy River, from which rose up quantities of wild duck, disturbed at their feast upon the wild rice by the noise of our oars, and by the cheery laughter and songs of our men. A large sand-bar has formed in the Lake of the Woods immediately across the mouth of the river, upon which great seas, rolling in from the ocean like lake beyond, broke with a loud roar, sending up clouds of spray in an angry fashion. Looking out westward as we passed into the space between the bar and the shore, where the water was calm as in a harbour, the lake was covered with "white-horses"—bespeaking, as the breeze was freshening, by no means a pleasant day's work for us. No open boat could have crossed the bar so we turned northward, keeping near shore, but between it and a line of sandy dunes, which seemed to be a continuation of the bar at the entrance to the river, and which had been formed most probably—as the bar has been—when the river's mouth was more to the north than it is at present. These sandbanks extended some six or eight miles, running tolerably parallel with the shore, and from a thousand to two thousand yards from it. The water was very shallow at places; and as we got towards the end of the protecting sandbanks, the force of the waves increased, so that all chance of beating to windward under sail was out of the question. We were therefore forced to put into a rocky island partly covered with trees, where we were detained two days by a heavy westerly gale—a severe trial to our patience. When we did get off, a journey of two days, sometimes under sail and sometimes having to depend solely upon the oar, took us to Rat Portage, at the northern extremity of the lake, where the Winnipeg River flowed out of it. Some of us were without guides in crossing the lake, which for miles at places is crowded with islands of all shapes and sizes; and as the maps were altogether wrong, many wandered about at the northern extremity of the lake searching in vain for the mouth of the Winnipeg River. The Lake of the Woods is about seventy-five miles long, with an average width of about seventy miles. It is in reality three lakes, separated one from the other by clusters of islands, all more or less pretty, some having fine perpendicular cliffs tinted with many shades of red, and standing majestically out of the water. All are well wooded, and in some there are a few acres under cultivation as gardens, where the Indians, from time immemorial,