

THE WELL OF SAINT JOHN.*

"There is plenty of room for two in here,
Within the steep tunnel of old gray stone;
And the well is so dark, and the spring so clear,
It is quite unsafe to go down alone."

"It is perfectly safe, depend upon it,
For a girl who can count the steps, like me;
And if ever I saw dear mother's bonnet,
It is there on the hill by the old ash tree."

"There is nobody but Rees Morgan's cow
Watching the dusk on the milk white sea.
'Tis the time and the place for a life-long vow,
Such as I owe you, and you owe me."

"Oh, Willie, how can I, in this dark well?
I shall drop the brown pitcher, if you let go;
The long roof is murmuring like a sea-shell,
And the shadows are shuddering to and fro."

"'Tis the sound of the ogh in Newton Bay
Quickens the spring as the tide grows less,
Even as the true love flows away
Counter the flood of the world's success."

"There is no other way for love to flow;
Whenever it springs in a woman's breast,
To the home of its own heart it must go,
And run contrary to all the rest."

"Then fill the sweet cup of your hand, my love,
And pledge me your maiden faith thereon,
By the touch of the lettered stone above,
And the holy water of St. John."

"Oh, what shall I say? My heart drops low,
My fingers are cold, and my hand too flat.
Is love to be measured by handfuls so?
And you know that I love you—without that."

"They stooped in the gleam of the faint light, over
The print of themselves on the limpid gloom;
And she lifted her fair palm toward her lover,
With her lips prepared for the words of doom."

But the warm heart rose, and the cold hand fell,
And the pledge of her faith sprang, sweet and clear,
From a holier source than the old saint's well,
From the never-dripping tide of love—a tear."

R. D. BLACKMORE, in *Harper's Magazine* for December.

* The old well of Saint John, in the parish of Newton Nottage, Glamorganshire, has a tide of its own, which is generally believed to run counter to that of the sea, some half-mile away. More careful observation shows that the contrary is less exact, though still sufficient to support its reputation, and gives zest to the cold pellucid draught.

"Æstus utriusque est
Continuo motu refluus, tamen ordine dispar."

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

CANADA'S MILITARY STATUS.

No. V.

Reading the events on the political horizon which, so far as man's foresight can discern, must transpire in course of time, we find that in the decade that follows the casting aside by Canada of her leading strings, the Maritime Provinces will have formed a political union and seceded from the nation, again preferring to don the cast-off rags of colonialism than remain a part and parcel of a country largely peopled with an alien race, and with the great bulk of its commercial life running in entirely different channels. In the meantime a free interchange of commodities will have been established between the whole of Canada and the United States. Democracy will now be spreading in the new-born nation with marvellous rapidity. By 1950 a new generation will have arisen on the soil. The great North-West will be luxuriantly yielding the treasures of its rich and riant globe to the myriads of immigrants who have come over from congested Europe; millions of Canadians will have crossed the border to the enjoyment of republican rule, and the peoples of the two nations will have become of one blood and of one mind; the Quebec French will have adopted more liberal views and abandoned the idea of hoisting the *Fleur-de-lis* over a colony of France; a sentiment growing year by year will have ripened into fruit, and a hundred million people will have burst asunder the barriers that have kept them separate for a century and a half and unite under one flag—the emblem of the American nation. The hope expressed from the throne in 1859, that Her Majesty's dominions in North America might ultimately be peopled in an unbroken chain from the Atlantic to the Pacific, by a loyal and industrious population of subjects of the British crown will thus be rudely shattered.

This, it is claimed, is the natural course of events. Before the last link in this chain is forged, however, international complications may arise that will necessitate a resort to arms. Without wishing to be regarded as pessimistic in my views, I will venture to assert that unless there is a radical change in Canada's military régime such a struggle would be a mere war of extermination, so far as the northern country is concerned. At the present moment, no less than 200,000 trained Canadian militia, in addition to British regulars, could hope to withstand an onslaught by the United States. And every year would make it harder for Canada, and easier for the Republic. Even if "the golden link of the crown" was still intact at the date of the conflict, it would, of necessity, be a holiday task for the American legions to capture the "Premier Colony," if no greater opposition could be made than now. It is a very erroneous idea that prevails among the colonists, that they can afford to put on a few frills, because of their connection with England. If the Americans desired to rule the continental roost, the conceit would soon be taken out of this fanciful flight. Whatever agencies England could bring to bear would only sharpen the energies of the American

forces, without visibly dampening their ardor. The want of a navy would be felt by the Americans, there is no doubt, but in the end, the wisdom of the Monroe doctrine would be heartily vindicated. In the event of an invasion superinduced by a dispute with Great Britain, which the Canadians themselves had no hand in bringing about, it is but natural to presume that England would do what she could for the colony. But under any circumstances, the Canadian militia would be the chief reliance, especially in every operation on their own ground. England might provide arms, money, ammunition—all of great value; but men are what count in the long run. It has been said that war is now so much a matter of ingenuity in the use of artillery, explosives, and all the modern appliances of field and sea, that the quality of the soldiers is of small importance. If this had been so, would Abu Klea and Tel-el-Kebir be inscribed on British standards? Emphatically, no.

In population, the Americans are to the Canadians as twelve to one. New York State alone contains as many people as the whole Dominion. Could England equalize these conditions in time of war? Not very well, even with the most unstinted pouring out of her coffers. The only hope of Canada reducing the disparity, and placing herself on a somewhat equal footing with so powerful an enemy—for an enemy they are certainly liable to become—lies in the possession of a standing army, a sound militia system, a sturdy fleet of warships on her inland waters, and strongly fortified works on those portions of her frontier most open to predatory assaults. It may be urged, that to adopt such a course would be to overwhelm the state with debt. Those who are acquainted with Canada's finances are well aware that her liabilities are rolling up at a startling rate, now amounting in round numbers, to three hundred millions. On the face of it, those figures imply unparalleled extravagance somewhere, and very forcibly lead to the impression that the Dominion executive is doing its best to outstrip the Shah in prodigality. But it is an open question, whether it would not be to the advantage of Canada to be in a position to protect her interests at all hazards. That her foreign credit would be improved by such a course goes without saying, a country unable to protect itself from external encroachments not presenting an attractive field for investment. When the French ruled Canada, the country was virtually a military settlement; every inhabitant a soldier, and forced to do the bidding of his feudal lord. But since Wolfe's dazzling charge on the Heights of Abraham gained for Britain the dominion of a continent, the military discipline of the country has been getting more and more lax. The tumultuous cleons of the hour do not seem to realize that Canada and the United States may be set by the ears at any moment. Rainbows of peace are highly desirable, but they cannot be expected to be of a perennial character.

At present, nine-tenths of Canada's frontier is assailable. Lake Michigan, with all the advantages of the great western entrepot at its command, would, in a time of war, be of tremendous strategical importance, and of much more value to the United States than Huron is to Canada. Quebec, the key of the Dominion, might be captured without a great deal of difficulty. It is true, it was here that Arnold, after his amazing march and perilous journey by the Kennebec and Chaudière—and daring, dashing Montgomery, were mowed down by merciless grape, in attempting to carry the citadel by an escalade. The times have changed, however, and Quebec is not what it once was. Montreal is probably more open to attack from the American frontier than any other Canadian city. American battalions could be thrown into it with the greatest ease by employing the several railway lines running into it from United States territory, and operated by American corporations. The city, too, is poorly defended, and could be readily taken by a spirited and resolute attack. Perhaps, Canada's best guarantee of exemption from mauling sallies would be in the establishment of a complete naval supremacy on her lakes and rivers, forming, as they do, the most accessible roads for invaders. A well organized fleet, ably supported on land, would ensure a comparative safety, and give the country some right to regard itself as a manly being, rather than a languid infant sucking at the heart of Britain. Of course, Canada has not the power at present; even if she had the will and the means, to build and equip a flotilla, owing to the law that prevents a colony equipping ships of war in times of peace. But these difficulties might be overcome, even while Canada wears the insignia of a grovelling dependency, and continues to worship the rising sun. When she throws off her colonial cloak, the power will certainly be hers, and the wisdom of pursuing such a course will then be clearly apparent.

From a military point of view, Canada was weakened to an incalculable extent by what Lord Palmerston delighted to call the "Ashburton capitulation." Canadians feel very strongly on this matter, or rather on what they regard as an "unjustifiable sacrifice," and do not hesitate to pronounce it the acme of chuckle-headed imperial diplomacy. Cutting the heart out of New Brunswick was bad enough, they contend, from commercial reasons. But this, argue the Canadians, might have been tolerated, had not the treaty swept from the grasp of Britain some of the most valuable strategical sites on the frontier of her North American possessions. In the seven-million acres ceded to the United States by this piece of clever political cozenage, as the colonials would term it, is a tract on the northern boundary overlooking the St. Lawrence, the highway of Canadian commerce, which enables the union to place an army on the banks of the Dominion Amazon by a twenty-four hours' march from the boundary line. Precisely what value this would be in war time is not easy to foresee; but the fact remains. The "hateful" concession also made it necessary to construct the Intercolonial railway in the most round-about fashion, hampering interprovincial trade to a ruinous degree; and compelling the adoption of a circuitous route for the transportation of troops, when a few hours' delay at a critical moment might forever cast the Canadian coalition into the lap of the American republic.

C. P. M.