

The Examiner.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY, WHEN FREEBORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC, MAY SPEAK FREE."—EURIPIDES.

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NEVER RAIL AT THE WORLD.

Never rail at the world—it is just as we make it,
We see not the flower if we set not the seed;
And as for ill-luck, why it's just as we take it—
The heart that's in earnest no bars can impede.
You question the justice which governs man's breast,
And say that the search for true friendship is vain;
But remember, this world, though it be not the best,
Is the next to the best we shall ever attain.

Never rail at the world, nor attempt to exalt
That feeling which questions society's claim;
For often poor Friendship is less in the fault,
Less changeable oft, than the selfish who blame:
Then ne'er by the changes of fate be deprest,
Nor wear like a fetter Time's sorrowful chain;
But believe that this world, though it be not the best,
Is the next to the best we shall ever attain!

A TALE OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

WRITTEN FOR THE EXAMINER.

CHAPTER I.

At day-break, on the 24th day of June, A. D. —, being the festival known in the Calendar, as St. John's day, the sleeping part of the crew of the vessel commanded by Sebastian Cabot, was awakened by the cry of "Land." This cry, so welcome to weary navigators in an unknown sea, at once caused all hands to spring upon deck. More sail was crowded upon the vessel, and in a few hours, the green woods of the Island, now named after the father of our beloved Queen, were visible. On approaching a little nearer the land, hills and hummocks that line the sea-coast, could be distinctly seen; and before the sun had passed the meridian, our adventurous navigators dropped their anchor at the entrance of the harbour now known as Richmond Bay, on the South side of the Island.

The main, and, indeed, only entrance for vessels of heavy burthen, was at that time that which is now called the north channel, the present deep channel being then only a narrow and shallow passage between the Sand-hills.

It was indeed a fair land to look upon. Though the exclusive range of sand-hills along the coast, presented nothing very pleasing to the eye; yet the interior, covered with the towering Beaches, Birches and Maples, growing in primitive luxuriance to the shores of the magnificent Bay; the bay itself, with its numerous islands; its waters glittering in the sunbeams, and as smooth as an icicle; its bosom covered with myriads of aquatic birds, among the flocks of which three or four Indian canoes might be seen gliding without any perceptible cause of motion; the placid waters of Darnley Basin stretching to the South, and apparently laving the trunks of the primeval giants of the forest; all conspired to present to the eyes of the strangers one of the most beautiful panoramas on earth.

I have said that the vessel anchored at the entrance of the North channel. This channel is formed by Fishery Island, on the South, and on the North by a very large one now rejoicing in the euphonious appellation of *Hog Island*.

About a mile from the ship, a canoe was seen crossing the channel, and its owner,—although a vessel, now seen for the first time, must have appeared strange and monstrous, held on his way without deigning to pay the least attention to it. The aborigines of the Island were, at that time, in all their primitive simplicity. They had heard of the all-absorbing white man, from their brethren of Nova Scotia; but he had not yet paid them a visit: he had not yet introduced among them the false appetites, vices and diseases of civilization. It is impossible to form any idea of the untainted and uncorrupted red man, from the appearance of his wretched descendants. Though now, in a great measure, by the persevering and saintlike endeavours of the truly pious Roman Catholic Priesthood, redeemed from their prevailing and besetting sin of drunkenness, to which nine

out of every ten were victims; yet, they have lost their feeling of independence. Condemned to perform the lowest and most menial offices to gain a livelihood, instead of the noble, bracing, and manly pursuits of the chase, their bodies have become enfeebled, their nerves, as it were, unstrung,—their step has lost its ancient dignity and elasticity, and their minds have sunk to a level with their occupations.

The occupier of the canoe mentioned above, was indeed one of the best specimens of his race. He was chief of that branch of the Micmac tribe which inhabited P. E. Island. His age appeared to be about thirty—he was upwards of six feet in height, slender, and as straight as one of his own arrows. The deep hazel of his eyes, when roused, shone like fire, but when his temper was in repose, lay, as it were, embosomed in their quiet depths. His hair, except the customary scalp lock, was closely shaved, and two eagle's feathers thrust through that lock denoted his rank. He was naked from the waist up, and, as he slowly paddled his canoe, every motion exhibited the symmetry and suppleness of his graceful form. His bow of hornbeam, and a quiver full of arrows, lay in the bottom of his canoe, while a stone hatchet was thrust through his deer skin belt. As soon as he was perceived from the vessel, a small boat rowed by four men, and steered by a fifth, left her and pulled towards him. Our warrior had, however, too much of the stoical dignity of his nation to take any notice of them, but still continued slowly paddling towards the Island in an oblique, or North Easterly direction across the channel. The boat, however, being steered North Westerly, or in a direction calculated to bring her between him and the Island, soon neared him. The steersman was Cabot himself, who, in his various voyages to the West Indies, and other parts of America, had picked up enough of the Indian language to make himself understood by the natives. He was armed with a fowling piece and hanger, and his men had each pistols in his girdle, and a hanger at his side. Upon approaching the apparently careless Indian, Cabot hailed him, and in a rude tone demanded in Indian, how deep the water was in the channel.

"My canoe never grounds in it," was the response.

"The white men and the red men are brothers?" asked Cabot, assuming the idiom of the language of the person addressed.

"Wamptook* has heard of the white man;—he has heard that he came to the land of the blue hills (Nova Scotia), and killed the red man with thunder and lightning. Is it so?"

"It is so. The white man wanted a little land to build his wigwam, but the red man was stingy."

"And because my brother would not give away his land to the white man, you killed him?"

"Even so," was the answer. "The red man has much land; he can spare some."

"Has the master of the big canoe much land in his own nation?"

"My nation is a great nation; the crow gets sleepy, and the wing of the hawk tires, in flying over the land of my nation."

"Let the white man then go to his nation. The red man has no land to give away. Go! Wamptook is a great chief."

He then paddled away, and Cabot, whose present chief wish was to get his vessel in a place of safety, did not attempt to hinder him; but proceeded to sound the channel, and in the evening anchored his vessel within the harbour.

The Council house of the Micmacs was nearly on the spot where the Princetown Church now stands. It was built upon a gentle declivity, which slopes to the margin of a small creek running up from Darnley Basin. The marsh around this creek, though now of a firm consistency, owing to the clearing and cultivation of the land

* Wild Goose.

in its vicinity, was then so soft, that a pole might be thrust in it to the depth of several feet. The woods around the Council house were very dark and thick; and although forty or fifty huts were in its immediate vicinity, not more than two or three were visible at one time.

At sunrise, on the morning after the event related above, about thirty dusky warriors were assembled in their Council house. They were silent as the grave. Occasionally a huge warrior would enter, and throwing from his arm a folded bear skin, take his seat upon it. At length, our acquaintance of the preceding evening entered, silently, like the rest, and took his seat. A pause of some minutes then followed, when an aged warrior, with bleached locks, but a form, which, though nearly ninety winters had passed over it, was still as erect as his native pine, rose slowly to his feet, and said, "Let Wamptook speak. Our ears watch."

The chief thus addressed, rose at once, and with a thrilling and startling eloquence, portrayed all the injuries done by the white men to their race, in other parts of America. Among others, he dwelt upon the introduction of the fire-water, as ardent spirits were called, by means of which the bad spirit entered into their countrymen, and caused them to commit abominable deeds; for the sake of which they have become slaves to the whites; had sold the hunting grounds of their fathers, and the burial places of their ancestors. That the white man had now come to their own beautiful Island for a like purpose, and that it was necessary for the safety of their nation, that he should be driven from its shores.

But how to put this plan in operation, baffled all the ingenuity of the tribe. They did not muster more than seventy warriors, and their arms consisted only of bows and arrows, and their wedge-like hatchets. With these, though naturally brave and daring, they hesitated to encounter the fearful thunder and lightning of the white men, of the nature of which they knew nothing from experience, but whose effects had been magnified tenfold, by the reports of their brethren from Nova Scotia. Stratagem, then, was necessary. Should it fail, however, rather than fly and leave their beautiful hunting grounds, the graves of their ancestors, and their beloved Island, to the rapacity of the stranger, they resolved to attack him, and die upon their own soil, from which (according to their belief), their spirits would be transferred to the happy hunting grounds, where the sun never sets; where the game never fails; where the fruits are always ripe; and where they would live, along with their ancestors, a life of undisturbed and never ending felicity.

One of the principal natural depots of food in this part of the Island, consisted of a large oyster bed, covering, at the date of our story, some thirty or forty acres; but which has now, from various foreign causes, as well as the continual demand upon its natives, become almost extinct. Its former large extent, and the many centuries during which it afforded food to the aborigines, may be inferred from the fact, that the shores in the vicinity of the bed, are covered to the depth of four or five feet with shells, many completely, others partially decayed, and a large proportion still remaining in a state of comparative soundness.* This bed was not more than half a mile from the Council house, and, whilst the dark browed warriors were still in consultation, they were interrupted by a scout, who communicated the alarming intelligence that the white men were, at that instant, plundering it! This news nearly over-set that equanimity and stoicism, for which the North

* There still remain upon the farms of W. Beairsto, Esq. Messrs. Coughlan, B. Beairsto, Christie, and others, large deposits of shells, in the condition mentioned above. Thousands of barrels of the same shells have been carried away for the purpose of making lime, and immense quantities of the debris, or decayed ones, used as a fertilizer of the soil, for which purpose it is very valuable. Many other similar deposits exist on the shores of Richmond Bay.