

(For Baldwin's Monthly.)

DIM FUTURE, SPEAK TO ME.

GEORGE W. BUNGAY.

"Speak out, dim future, speak to me,
As shells speak to the sighing sea."
And then I bowed my eager ear,
And hushed my heart, that I might hear:
The tones were sad and soft and low
As the soft whispers of the snow,
And fell upon my heart, as flakes
Fall on the palpitating lakes.

A chill crept through my trembling frame,
And turned to ice my blood of flame;
Like moonlight on a marble vase,
A smile was on the Future's face;
And then came cold words, clear and slow,
As though a statue spoke in snow;
And this is what it said to me,
As shells speak to the sighing sea:

"In vain you bow the eager ear,
The Future will not let you hear
The story of your coming fate;
Be strong to toil—have faith to wait."
And this is all those lips revealed:
I looked, and lo! the mouth was sealed!
The Future would not speak to me,
As shells speak to the sighing sea.

To the fair Present then I said:
"Light with thy lamps the path I tread;
Give me true courage in the fight,
To hate the wrong and love the right,
To battle bravely for the weak,
To speak for those who cannot speak,
To live and toil for others' weal,
And heal the wounds that man can heal."

The Present pointed to the skies—
The clock that counts the centuries—
And said that "time is flying fast;
Between the Future and the Past
There are no moments for delay;
To-morrow comes, and yesterday
Has fled: now is the precious time
To crown thy life with deeds sublime."

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MONTREAL.

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

When Cartier, with his enterprising band, ascended the River St. Lawrence, in 1537, his penetrating mind at once detected the future importance of the beautiful island which was to become the centre of a vast civilization in this northern region. The aborigines—no mean observers of the picturesque—had already built here a village known as Hocheloga. The island itself was called Tiatiake, which being interpreted, is Beaver Dam.

Standing at the confluence of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers, even at the time of Cartier it was a place of no inconsiderable importance to the Indian, as affording him an abundance of game, and fish inexhaustible, as well as peltry of the choicest description. The village of Hocheloga stood upon a lovely esplanade sloping to the river which swept by, bearing to the ocean the mighty waters of the great western lakes, making a highway to the east and the west for his birch canoe, and being in itself an aid and a defence. In the rear arose the mountain, known subsequently as Mont Real, which defended it from the cold blasts of the north. Cartier was the first to raise a European flag upon this mountain, which must have seemed a strange ceremony to the simple savages, who had so long been sole occupants of the whole region.

It was not long before a small town, rude in structure, but the foundation of a kingdom, destined to slip through the hands of the founder, supplanted the wigwams of the savage. The symbol of the Cross shone from the heights of Mont Real, and the chanting of sacred hymns arose instead of the deadly cry of the war-

whoop. Missionaries of the Society of Jesus, men of learning and unquestioned piety, followed in the steps of Cartier, and with wonderful self-abnegation, wonderful devotion, and never-tiring labor, sought to win this heathen race to a knowledge of Christianity.

It was no easy task they had undertaken, for they were naturally a bold, independent people, ready at aggression, and surcharged with various superstitions, which rendered them jealous of forms and signs which might be more powerful than those of their own medicine-men; prayers were incantations to them, which might bring upon their devoted heads the worst inflictions of the evil spirit. Hence the sign of the cross made upon the brow of a child seemed to their eyes a powerful charm, which would render him cowardly, imbecile, womanish—if it did not eventually deprive him of life. Tumults and revolts succeeded in rapid succession, and more than one saintly servant of the Cross won, upon the site of the present Montreal, the crown of martyrdom.

From that early day to the final overthrow of the French in Canada, these missionaries never slackened in their zeal to convert the Indians to Christianity. Here they wandered amidst pathless snows and adamant ice, faint and hungry, foot-sore and overborne with danger and fatigue, but never flinching from the duty of a follower of the Cross. Cheveruse, Charlevoix, and a long list unknown to fame, labored in this region, and often watered the soil with their blood.

At length the conversion of the Indians seemed complete, and they became fast allies to the Crown of France; but this adoption of a new faith was learned with profound contempt by the warlike and semi-civilized tribes of the Iroquois Confederation, who, perhaps, like diplomats in general, waited only for a pretext of assault, that they might become masters of the rich hunting-grounds bordering the St. Lawrence. Accordingly, in 1689, two thousand warriors stealthily crossed the river and fell upon the devoted village of Montreal, sacrificing without mercy young and old, priest and neophyte. They held possession of it for several months, but were at length driven out, with great slaughter, by the French and their combined allies of the northeast.

Montreal now began to assume importance to the French Crown, and troops were sent over to confirm the occupancy of so desirable a location—desirable in a commercial point of view, and still more so as a point needful to carry out the already incepted policy of France to confine the English to the sea-coast of the southern part of the State of Maine and south of the St. Lawrence, as well as east of the Alleghany Mountains. It was a plan worthy of the highest statesmanship, but remembered now because of the signal failure in carrying it out. Hence originated what is known as "The Old French War."

Immediately after the repulse of the Iroquois from Montreal, it was strongly fortified, and a wall of stone fifteen feet high, surmounted by towers at convenient distances, rendered it a strong fortress, and impregnable to purely Indian attack. Much of this wall still exists, and the whole aspect of the place bears witness to its French origin. For more than a hundred years they expended all wealth and power to build up and adorn this beautiful queen of the north. Taste, learning, religion—all contributed their share to render it a desirable point for this inception of empire; but the French have never been successful colonists.

In 1760 Montreal passed forever from the hands of its founders, though their language, their customs and religion still cling to the place, and make it one of the most non-English cities in the world that bows to English supremacy. In the year we have named, the New England forces combined themselves with those under Lord Amherst, and one strong point after another was compelled to surrender. Quebec, and next Montreal; and thus ended the rule of France in the Canadas, and thus, like the baseless fabric of a dream, passed away the visions of empire. I confess, when I visited this city with a party of friends in 1858, and heard the great bell of Notre Dame, at whose call I went to the early Mass, and listened to the French *patois* in the streets, and saw the market women in their short skirts, huge hats, and jackets, such as were worn a hundred years ago, I half saddened over the past, and felt a kindly pity

for Lot's wife in her robe of salt, so cruelly punished for "looking back."

The English now held undisputed authority over Montreal, till our war of the Revolution once more disturbed its repose. Holding possession—as one might say—of a continent, they were disposed to undervalue the importance of a city now considered of so much commercial value, and its wall and fortifications fell into neglect. The rash attack of Ethan Allen upon the place resulted in little of moment, except that he was taken prisoner and sent in chains to England.

A few weeks after the repulse of Ethan Allen, Montgomery appeared before Montreal with peal of drum and cannon roar, and the citadel that had borne the flags of France, and afterward that of England, now bore the Stars and Stripes of the new Republic. With ill-disciplined and ill-provided troops, Montgomery held the city as best he could. He was young, had married a lovely wife, and pined for home. He writes to Washington:

"Will not your health permit you to reside in Montreal this Winter? I must go home if I walk by the side of the lake, this Winter. I am weary of power, and to tally want that patience and temper so requisite for such a command."

It was not permitted him to return: when he turned his back upon the glittering spires and dazzling roofs of Montreal the young hero went forth to a sad but glorious destiny before the walls of Quebec.

All this region of Montreal and the St. Lawrence is full of historic interest. The awards of battle reconveyed them to the British Government, and till within a few years Montreal was the seat of Government for the Canadas. The Victoria Bridge over the St. Lawrence at this city is one of the most wonderful structures in the world, rivaling in magnitude and strength the vast works of ancient Egypt. The navigation of the St. Lawrence, the immense canals that overcome its rapids, the great River Ottawa, all combine to render this beautiful city what the foresight of the French anticipated—a point of inestimable value in the contingencies of empire.

It has now ceased to be "Debatable Land" between ourselves and England, but here the issues of battle have been sore contested. Down the river and its tributaries the Indian propelled the birchen canoe, where now mighty ships ride at anchor. Danes and Norwegians doubtless have navigated these stormy waters; Vikings have clashed arms with aboriginal warriors; here the gallant courtier of France laid aside the frivolities of fête and tourney, and found braver delight in confronting real, rather than fictitious perils; laying here, with statesmanlike sagacity, the foundations of an empire, which to him and his country was to be a *Macbeth* Crown, no heir of his wearing the circlet of sovereignty.

It will be remembered it was at Montreal that Moore wrote his "Canadian Boat-Song," and listening to the bells of Notre Dame, when he wrote—

"Faintly as tolls the evening chime
Our voices keep tune and our oars keep time—
Utawa's tide, this trembling moon
Shall see us float over thy waters soon," etc.

The Indian pronunciation of what is now called Ottawa, the accent on the first syllable, is prettier even than the *Utawa* of Moore, which was *Otawa*—O instead of U, and the accent on the second syllable.

JOSH BILLINGS' "FINE-CUT."

The quickest way to beat most men in an argument is to listen and say nothing.

The time and munny spent in learning to play a good game of billiards would buy a nice farm.

Don't marry abuv nor belo yure rank, for it iz impossible for even love itself to reconcile the differences.

Yung man, don't tell all yu know, on enny subjekt—unless yu are under oath.

There are men whoze impudence iz not offensive, if they wasn't impudent they wouldn't be anything.

I would not like to be the last man left on earth, the first one was a failure, and I am afrade the last one will be.

Az long az vice don't bekum a custom the world is safe.

Very fu people examine the pedigree of a suckcess.

If yu don't want ennything, everyboddy haz got sumthing to lend.