

Liverpool, and others, a fleet of vessels larger than the *Sovereign of the Seas* or the *Flying Cloud*—say of 2400 tons burden. One of them, the *Lightning*, sailed to Melbourne from Liverpool in sixty-two days, and returned in sixty-four days—unapproached time. The *Donald McKay*, the *James Banes*, and the *Champion of the Seas* all performed notable service, but scarcely so satisfying as if it had been done by clippers of British make, although most of the successful clippers built in Great Britain after the triumphs of the Americans plainly showed in their modelling the influence of transatlantic ideas.

The opening of the Panama Railway in 1855, the establishment of the Pacific Mail Steam-ship Company, and the decline of the California and Australia marine trade conspired to close the clipper epoch. In that year there was an unparalleled depression in American ship-building, and

desertion in many ship-yards. The intolerable dictation of the trades-unions came in to swell the trouble, and lead in some cases to the insolvency of the master-builders. The workmen whose services are necessary to the construction of ships—that is to say, the carpenters, calkers, joiners, painters, blacksmiths, riggers, and rope and sail makers—had been earning during the prosperous clipper period as much in three or four days as previously they had received in a week; and all at once they resolved to work only three or four days in a week, making it impossible for builders, who had entered into contracts under heavy forfeits for non-fulfillment, to keep their engagements. The partial failure of the crops of 1854, and the warlike attitude of Europe, were additional causes of depression. Seven years later the outbreak of the civil war drove American commerce from the seas.

ENSNARED.

DEEP in a vast primeval wood
My half-decaying cabin stood.
Its walls were mossy, and its floor
With stain and mould was darkened o'er.
Therein I dwelt, aloof from care,
Alone with fancies sweet and rare.

Long after dawn I lay in bed
And heard the woodpecker overhead
Beat on the roof his rattling call,
And heard the wind-waves rise and fall,
Whilst from afar, worn keen and thin,
Faint memories of the world came in.

At noon the wood was strangely still:
No fluttering wing, no tapping bill;
Shadow and sunshine side by side
Drowns in slim aisles and vistas wide;
Even the brook's voice, rich and full,
Seemed slowly lapsing to a lull.

When night came on, the owl came too:
"Hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo-oo-oo!"
And sly faint footfalls, here and there,
Betrayed the hesitating hare;
Whilst in the tree-tops, dark and deep,
The wind sighed as a child asleep.

Day-time or night-time, all was well;
With light or dew God's blessings fell.
For coarser dreams I had no room:
My heart was like a lily bloom,
And every song I sang was sweet
As the blue violets at my feet.

But at the last, all unaware,
Unlucky bird! I touched the snare,
And (in the city's meshes wound)
My cabin never more I found,
Nor that sweet solitude where naught,
Save Nature, helped me when I wrought.

THE BIRTH OF A NATION.

"MY lords," said the Bishop of St. Asaph, in the British House of Lords, in 1774, "I look upon North America as the only great nursery of freedom left upon the face of the earth." It is the growth of freedom in this nursery which really interests us most in the Revolutionary period; all the details of battles are quite secondary. Indeed, in any general view of the history of a nation, the steps by which it gets into a war and finally gets out again are of more importance than all which lies between. No doubt every skirmish in a prolonged contest has its bearing on national character, but it were to consider too curiously to dwell on this, and most of the continuous incident of a war belongs simply to military history. If this is always the case, it is peculiarly true of the war of American Independence, which exhibited, as Lafayette said, "the grandest of causes won by contests of sentinels and outposts."

In April, 1777, John Adams wrote proudly to his wife, "Two complete years we have maintained open war with Great Britain and her allies, and after all our difficulties and misfortunes are much abler to cope with them now than we were at the beginning." The tale of the long years of hope and fear which followed has been several times told in this Magazine, and here at least need not be dwelt on. Those who remember the sort of subdued and sullen hopefulness which prevailed, year in and year out, in the Northern States, during the late war for the Union, can probably conceive something of the mood in which the American people saw months and years go by without any very marked progress, and yet with an indestructible feeling that somehow the end must come. The war for Independence dragged on its weary course; the winter at Valley Forge was worse than the winter at Morristown; Steuben took the hungry soldiers who hitherto had had no uniform drill—who numbered sometimes only thirty men to a regiment, and marched in Indian file—and drilled them into an army. Burgoyne surrendered at Saratoga in 1777, and for a moment America, and even Europe, thought the war was won. That surrender is the only American battle included by Sir Edward Creasy in his *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the*

World, and yet for six years its decisiveness was not recognized as final, and the war went on.

It was from France at last that not merely the material but the moral support came. Alliance with France meant friendship with the leading European nation. No power of imagination can now fully recall how unimportant to Europe were then these little colonies on the west coast of the Atlantic. America is not now more indifferent to the career of the smallest German state than the smallest German state then was to America, except as the Prince of Hesse-Cassel found there a market for three million dollars' worth of hired soldiers. On the other hand, when the importance of the American colonies was recognized by Spain, it was because Spain also had colonies, and feared to lose them. After all, she was right in her instincts. When Vergennes blandly assured the Spanish government that there was "no ground for seeing in this people a new race of conquerors," he did not look forward to the Mexican war. At any rate, Spain was hostile; the rest of Europe indifferent. To Frenchmen alone the new transatlantic nation was something interesting, a pet, a hobby, a philosophic whim—something to be taken up and maintained as a theory. Once adopted, it must be sustained handsomely—"an ill-favored thing, but mine own," as Touchstone, in the play, says of his bride.

The first treaty with France—which was also the first treaty of the United States with any foreign government—was signed February 6, 1778, two months after the news of Burgoyne's surrender had reached Paris. It had been negotiated mainly between Franklin and Vergennes, and its liberal and generous tone bore the marks of that singular diplomatic ability which in Franklin was called simplicity and philosophy. His triumph was a triumph of temperament; he conquered, as Emerson says the wise man should, "without the crossing of bayonets." When Franklin and Adams worked together, the zeal, the energy, the self-assertion, were supplied by Adams, but the patience, the soothing good-nature, the unerring tact, came from Franklin alone. As a French historian has said of him, "his virtues and his renown negotiated for him, and before the second year of his mission had expired no