

The Toronto World

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A CONVENIENT DOCTRINE.

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It is well to be thus assured. While it is a truism that death is common and that those who die are constantly in its shadow, yet men have become habituated to the anticipation of loss. Whenever the dread call comes it inevitably brings with it the sense of deprivation, of separation, of loss. It is not so even when the death comes as a result of a long and precluded active participation in the affairs of life. How much stronger then it is when, as in the case of Principal William Caven, there were no signs of the approaching end of time, when he was in the prime of life, when he had become in several important ways the representative man of the nation.

Much has already been said, and will be said, of the late principal as an erudite theologian, as a searching preacher, and as a wise counsellor in public questions, as an earnest and constant moral and social reformer. He was all of these and more than all. He was a man of a high and noble character, a man of a high and noble character, a man of a high and noble character.

Only one conclusion can be drawn from this extraordinary reputation, and that is that the record of the Ross government will not be examined and recapitulated. Ontario Liberalism has had much more than a full and fair trial. It has been in power more than a generation. Promises have been made—plenty of them—but the beaten track of party trickery was too congenial to be abandoned. The life of the Ross government has been spent, in considering the public good, but in devising actions methods for retaining office.

It is a sad fact that a death, however direct, rather adds a certain certainty than throws doubt upon it. It is not to be wondered at that the defenders of the government prefer to devote themselves to what they call "new evangel of Liberalism," rather than face the dark story of opportunities misused and trust betrayed.

It is the worth of an "evangel"—save the mark—preached by detected but astute men. Independent electors who take a dispassionate survey of the political life of Ontario, must feel that improvement is impossible while the present ministry, or any fragment of it, remains in office. Had Premier Ross been the sincere friend of electoral purity he now professes himself to be, he would not have sought to muzzle the voice of the people and circumvent their wishes. He would have recognized that any government worthy of the name has a higher duty than the fabrication of schemes to retain the seat of power without the reality. After all it is said that can be said, what evidence has this government given of motive for its existence other than that of self-preservation—honestly, possibly, but at any cost if necessary.

There has not been a single one of the many grave political scandals in which the Liberal party has been implicated where some one or other of the ministry has not been involved and the government itself enveloped in a cloud of suspicion. Men of keen feeling would not have borne it and no premier exulting the high standard his position calls for would have tolerated it. By his failure to keep himself and his cabinet above suspicion he has himself invited a verdict of condemnation from the electors who place premium above party, and electoral purity above a passing advantage.

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An American force, having previously crossed, had taken possession of the heights above Queenston; from this they were being dislodged by a composite British force under General Sheile. Had the troops at Lewiston been induced to cross, the Americans would then easily have outnumbered the attacking British forces; but the volunteers had developed a sudden "constitutional subterfuge," that their term of enlistment called for service only within the state, in consequence their comrades-in-arms were driven, many of them, over the precipice into the Niagara, while they remained passive onlookers.

"This," writes the major-general, "was not due to cowardice, but an unwillingness to participate in a long invasion of Canada." American historians, however, invariably appear to think otherwise. Major-General Van Rensselaer, who commanded the American forces during that campaign, in writing Major-General Dearborn of the affair, said:

"Reinforcements being urgently required, I recrossed the river to accelerate their movement, but to my utter astonishment, the ardor of the unengaged troops had entirely subsided. Lieutenant-Col. Bloomer, who was in Lewiston at the time, mounted their horses and rode thru the camp exhorting the companies to proceed—but all in vain."

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