

The Saturday Reader.

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CANADIAN BRIGANDS.

A THRILLING NARRATIVE

Of the exploits of the

NOTORIOUS GANG OF ROBBERS

Who infested

Q U E B E C

In 1834 and 1835.

Translated for the SATURDAY READER from a French pamphlet published in 1837.

CAMBRAY AND HIS ACCOMPLICES.

CHAPTER XV.

Waterworth's reasons for turning King's Evidence—Correspondence between Cambray and Waterworth on this subject.

In the course of these revelations, Waterworth has not given any reason for having turned King's evidence against his associates, and it became necessary to use much persuasion in order to induce him to speak of it, for it seemed as though he reproached himself for the act. At last, however, he consented, and it was thus he explained the fact:

"I have been in the lock-up several days for some trick I had been guilty of, and during that time I experienced all the horror of isolation; my days were occupied in giving way to the most violent transports of rage, and my nights by frightful dreams.

"I fancied I saw figures tracing my death sentence on the walls around me, or busily employed in erecting my scaffold.

"One day when I had exhausted myself in one of my fits of desperation, and felt as if all the energies of life had departed, the jailer paid me a visit, and informed me that Cambray had had an interview with the officers of the Crown, and had volunteered to reveal the true details of our criminal career, on condition of being set at liberty on the expiration of the Criminal Term in September (1836), and of receiving pardon for his share in the matter.

"He stipulated," said the jailer, "above all to have his freedom without any delay whatever." This led me to suspect his real motive in saying, as he did on one occasion, "We have large sums of money in reserve—as yet we have not touched the Congregational silver—and it was doubtless Cambray's intention to come out snugly, and sacrifice me for the purpose of being able to take entire possession of our mutual gains. 'Well, since I have been betrayed, I am delivered from my oaths. I must be before them.'

"On that day, without any condition whatever, I offered my declaration to the officer of the Crown, and my offer was accepted. I do not know whether I was the victim of any trickery, but this I know that Cambray swore revenge to the death for my having played him such a trick.

"As we were kept in separate apartments we were obliged to write to each other. This we often did. Our correspondence generally turned on projects of escape, or new expedients proposed by Cambray, with the view of getting out of our trouble. The following, however, I received last autumn:

"Waterworth!

"You have sworn by the Devil to keep our secrets. You have broken your oath, you have turned King's evidence, you stand dishonoured before all your associates as having eaten your own words. For that act you well know I have the right to kill you. Think not that because I

and others are now enchained between four walls you can escape my vengeance. When I desire it I can find a subterraneous passage to your cell and strangle you; but you know I have ever been your friend, and I have now the means of saving us both. I am only accused of theft, —the murder of Sivrac is yet unpunished,—let us like two brothers, you and I, bear witness against some of the rascals in this place; against P— or G— if you like.

You see by this means we shall both be saved, for the murder of Sivrac was an abominable affair, one that I almost regret, for not one sou did I put in my pocket. As soon as I am once free you shall have half of my hidings.

I must tell of a good precautionary trick I have taken. About twenty rascals have lately left the brig (prison), and I succeeded in speaking to them. They intend assaulting everybody in the streets by way of revenge. This will have the effect of diverting attention from us and throwing the indignation of the public upon them, you see.

It's a pity you have betrayed me, but I may yet make a large fortune. Write me if you are willing to arrange matters concerning Sivrac's affair; if not, I shall have your life.

CAMBRAY.

"To this I replied somewhat as follows:

"Cambray!

"You reproach me with having violated my obligations and of betraying my associates, but it is from you I have taken example, and now you propose fresh treason, still more contemptible, for it is founded on falsehood.

For a length of time you have deceived me, representing fortune and pleasure as the reward of brigandage; you have taken advantage of your influence over me, and made me the instrument of your cupidity; but I have arisen from this dream—my eyes are open—yes, I will be King's evidence, not against the innocent whom you would charge with the murder of Sivrac, but against you, Cambray; and you will see when my recital is made whether or not my memory is a faithful one.

You must be an incarnate devil to boast of having engaged the miserable wretches who were set at liberty to attack people in the street, in order to divert public attention from yourself. You ask my motive for acting thus, here is my answer—

The devil told me I was doing well, and afterwards that my deeds were chronicled in hell!

Such is the case now—I am no longer under your influence, and I believe I need not respect the criminal oaths I have taken any longer. For this reason I shall reveal everything. I laugh at your threats and your impotent wrath. Rely no longer upon me. WATERWORTH.

"It was not without considerable effort that I resolved upon sending this desperate answer to my comrade, from whom in return I received the following reply:

"Waterworth!

"We will yet meet, in a cell, in a narrow passage, on the scaffold, perhaps, or at any rate in hell—no matter where, but so surely as you fall into my hands I'll choke you—I'll massacre you. Meantime I send you my direct curses, thou infamous traitor. CAMBRAY.

"At last the March Assizes (1837) came, Cambray and his accomplices were placed upon trial, and I rendered evidence in the matter. I must admit when I was confronted with my former comrades my heart revolted at my position, and remorse followed on the footsteps of truth.

"Alas I wish I could see Cambray before I leave. I would not be afraid to meet him for he is unarmed. We could not behold each other without emotion, I am certain.

"But here I must be allowed to terminate this recital, to draw a veil over these sad events, for the remainder is known to you all."

Some days after this (6th April, 1837,) Waterworth was set at liberty, and left for ever, to seek his fortune elsewhere.

CHAPTER XVI.

Trial of Cambray and Mathieu—Conviction and Sentence—The First Night of the Condemned.

During the long and interesting trial undergone by Cambray and Mathieu for the robbery committed at Mrs. Montgomery's, and of which we have given the full details, the accused, seated in the criminal dock, overlooking the crowd, remained perfectly calm and collected, regarding from time to time with much assurance and an unfaltering eye, witnesses, judges, and jury, and casting at times disdainful or threatening glances at certain personages among the crowd. Mathieu, especially, appeared imperturbably cool, while his accomplice, Cambray, more capable of feeling the humiliation of his position, was, to judge from his convulsive efforts to repress his emotions, violently agitated. Not that fear or remorse had ought to do with these sensations—rage and disappointment alone were the cause of all his pangs. The sufferings he had experienced in prison were deeply graven on his countenance, slight contractions about his mouth marked infallibly the anguish and mental torture he had endured, and effaced in some measure his affected serenity; and he, who had been so remarkable for manly vigour and joyousness, now appeared ill in health and shattered in constitution. Notwithstanding that his guilt was manifest to all present, still more than one gazed on him with expressions of sincere compassion, while the more timid and simple, looking upon a man above the stamp of vulgarity, admired the apparently unwavering fortitude with which he comforted himself.

On Waterworth's entering the box to bear witness against them, they stood up and glared at him with eyes of fire, looking as if they wished to penetrate to the inmost depths of his heart. But the denouncer was prepared for this encounter, for he raised his eyes to Cambray calmly and collectedly, and, having gazed on him for a moment, without evincing the least emotion, he turned to the Court, and gave his testimony fearlessly and with precision: it was evident he had made up his mind to unveil the whole, so resigned and open his confession. Nevertheless the struggle with his nature was severe ere he could reconcile himself to this act of treachery, still the tenor of his conversation was not tinged with that remorse or confusion that so frequently forms the substratum of feeling in the hearts of the guilty, even where every other sentiment of honour has been abandoned.

The evidence went sorely against the accused; the only defence that Cambray's counsel could make was reduced to a question of credulity on the part of the accomplice. Mathieu's counsel asked Mrs. Montgomery if, when she heard the name of Mathieu pronounced, it was not possible that it might have been intended for some other person than the prisoner, from which arose the question whether it was not a fact that the name was a common one.

The jury retired, and re-entered immediately, amid the most universal anxiety on the part of all present. Everybody, but especially the prisoners, tried to read the verdict in their faces.