

Truth's Contributors.

THE CANADIAN GLENGARRY OVER FORTY YEARS AGO

BY JOHN FRASER, MONTREAL.
No. 6.

It is a little over forty years since our first visit to the County of Glengarry, the most easterly county in the Province. This happened a few years after the troubles of 1837 and 1838. We had seen a good deal of the Glengarry Highlanders before that visit, but were ignorant of the homes in which they lived. To tell the truth, we had formed very curious notions of them.

The writer, as a boy, had ridden among the Staff-Officers of the 1st Regiment, Colonel Fraser's, in February, 1838, on their entrance to Montreal, preparatory to their being sent to the frontier. That was a grand entrance and reception; there were over one hundred double sleighs conveying the regiment. It was a perfect jam all the way from the Tanneries, where Major—now Colonel—David met them with a guard of honor and escorted them down to their temporary barracks in some old warehouses then standing near the present custom house. We again met the same regiment, as described in No. 5 article in TRUTH, at Beauharnois on the 11th of November, 1838. Therefore, we knew a little of what manner of men they were.

It was early in the month of March. There were no railways in those early days in Canada, except that short line between Laprairie and St. John's. Our conveyance was a single cutter and a smart horse. There were two of us; the distance from Montreal was about eighty miles, which took two days to perform by easy stages, halting the first night at the old stage house at the cedars.

In the early afternoon of the second day we reached the old inn at Lancaster village, and informed the host that we were on a visit to Fraserfield, the residence of Colonel Fraser, and obtained from him all information as to the roads. The country was then new to us. We followed his directions and reached our destination, about three miles above Williamstown, a little after dusk.

We had often heard that Fraserfield was one of the finest country residences in Upper Canada, but, really, we had no idea that so grand a building was to be found in the wilds of Glengarry as the one before which we drew up. It was a large two-storey cut stone double house, situated in the centre of a block of 1,000 acres of land, and on our arrival it was all ablaze—lighted up "from top to bottom."

A large party had just seated themselves to dinner. We felt taken aback and wished our visit had been delayed a day later. A true Highland welcome greeted us, however, which soon made us feel at home. They were all Highlanders seated around that festive board, every one, although personally strangers, appeared to know of us and all about the Lower Canadian home whence we came, therefore, we were soon put at our ease.

The merry-making at the time of our visit was to do honor to the meeting of old friends—North-Western, Hudson Bay Company traders and old military men. Glengarry could then boast of a goodly number of the latter, veterans of the war of 1812. There were in fact at that time nearly one hundred officers living in the county who had served in the two regiments during the rebellion therefore, the tone was altogether military. There had been several dinner parties and balls previous to our arrival and a few followed.

Let us try to picture and recapture that old dining hall at Fraserfield, as we entered and took our seats among that noted and dignified assemblage. There was the old Colonel himself, at the head of the table doing the honors as he well knew how. He was known far and near in Canada. We shall try and give the names of the assembled guests as correctly as we can.

There were the Hon. George McTavish, of the Hudson Bay Company; and Miss Cameron, afterward Mrs. McTavish; old Dr. Grant, father, we believe, of Dr. Grant, of Ottawa; Dr. McIntyre, now sheriff at Cornwall; Colonel Carmichael, of the Regular Army, then commanding on particular service at the old fort at the Coteau; old Hugh McGillis, of Williamstown, uncle of John McGillis, of Montreal; old Mr. McGillivray, father of Dunnaglas; the two McDonnells, Greenfield and Myles, we believe, were there; some members, at least, of these two families were present, and, if we mistake not, old Captain Cattenach was present, and several other gentlemen, not forgetting the ladies of the different families.

Every Glengarrian will recall those old names, and if they were not personally known to him, still he will recognize them as landmarks of his native county of a past generation.

The ravages of forty years have left but few remaining of the old or even of the young who had joined in that merry-making! The writer can only call to mind three living besides himself, namely:—Sheriff McIntyre and his wife and Mrs. Pringle, wife of Judge Pringle, of Cornwall. These two were daughters of Colonel Fraser, being the only living members of his family. There may possibly be some of the younger members of the other families still living who were in that company, but the writer is not aware of such.

We spent a few days with our kind friends and paid many visits to old friends of our family who had often visited our paternal home in Lower Canada. Among others we paid a visit to Father Mackenzie, of the Kirk, at the Williamstown Manse; also to old St. Raphaels, to pay our respects to Father John Macdonald. By the way, all Glengarrians will remember that Colonel Fraser belonged to the Catholic Church.

There was a spot very dear to the writer. Close by old St. Raphaels was the early childhood home of his mother. It was the spot on which his maternal grandfather had pitched his Canadian tent and erected his Glengarry log house. This old log house was raised close by the home and the church of that good old priest—the late Bishop McDonnell, whose first charge, we believe, was at St. Raphaels. These dear old log houses of Canada the early homes of the fathers of an empire yet to be! They, like their occupants have vanished or have gone down to dust, but we trust the spots on which they stood will be held sacred by succeeding generations of Canadians.

The old grandmother of that Glengarry log house lived there till about her ninety-fourth year. She was the mother of Colonel Fraser. We saw her old spinning wheel, one of those grand old spinning wheels of early Canadian days, and the knitting needles with which she had knitted pair after pair of warm stockings and woolen gloves for her two soldier boys while they were doing battle on the Niagara frontier for their king and country during the war of 1812. The same might be said of hundreds of other Glengarry mothers. Many of those Glengarry boys were laid low on Queenston-Heights, Lundy's Lane, Chippewa and at the evacuation of old Fort George, and other lesser fights in 1812.

This short sketch may prove interesting to many young Glengarrians now scattered over the Dominion of Canada, who have come to the front within the past forty years, to read of a social gathering of a past generation in their native county, and they may recall the scene which gladdened their young days.

Old Montrealers, now scattered over the country, will remember the return of Colonel Fraser's regiment from the frontier in the Spring of 1838, and to have seen that "big Glengarry Highlander" shoulder the cannon of the regiment and present arms with it while passing in review before Sir John Colborne.

THE MONTREAL SCARE IN 1837.

BY T. S. BROWN.

The story of the great Montreal scare in December, 1837, created, in fact, by the report of an approaching enemy, (the supposed enemy being farmers then lying quietly in their beds more than twenty miles away), is well and graphically told by Mr. John Fraser, in TRUTH of March 14th. The turnout there referred to was an affair serious enough—especially to the fat ones—for those who marched out of the city to the top of Tannery Hill, but it was a matter of fun for all those who remained snug at home in their beds. Nothing so ridiculous has occurred since the "Battle of the Kegs," celebrated in rhyme in the days of the American Revolution. For the first there was a trifling cause; for the last, none whatever.

Philadelphia was in possession of the British forces. One night there came a report that the rebels were coming down the Delaware with a flotilla to burn the city. There was a general call to arms and military preparations far exceeding the Montreal movement, when it was discovered that the supposed flotilla was nothing but a large quantity of empty kegs and barrels thrown into the river many miles above, that were coming down with the current.

As to the whole district north of Montreal being in open rebellion, the whole amounted to this. There was great agitation in the County of Two Mountains during the month of November, 1837, when the people met at military gatherings precisely as they had met at political gatherings. Very few were armed, and there was some mustering and drilling among them, but the remainder were mere lookers-on, and when the dispersion of the patriots on the Richelieu became known, all retired to their homes except a small number kept together by Chenier at what was called the camp at St. Eustache, 24 miles from Montreal. All his friends, or "friends of the cause," urged him to break up this camp and send away the men, but he steadfastly refused; first for an impulse of general self-sacrifice and secondly for a high military consideration.

The whole British force was then concentrated at Montreal, and so long as he could keep up the delusion of a patriot army ready to attack the city this whole British force was retained there, leaving the entire right bank of the St. Lawrence from Quebec to the Provinceline, free to the patriots, or to any other invasion they might invite from the States. When Sir John Colborne appeared before the patriots of St. Eustache, on the 14th December, with 2,000 men, Chenier threw himself into the church with about two hundred men, of whom only about eighty were armed with guns. Nobody stood upon the defense elsewhere but, in the firing, seventy patriots were killed, including Chenier, who died a glorious death, fighting to the last.

Chenier's name will rank hereafter with the past heroes of chivalry. The Roman Catholic church never canonizes a saint until 100 years after his death in order that all opponents may have had time to say out their say, and patriots must not expect better terms, but it is amusing in the meantime to find people in the great Province of Ontario still vilifying the men to whose efforts, in 1837, they owe the benefit of good government, while they extol those who at the time did all in their power to maintain a government which even Lord Sydenham declared, in one of his letters, was so bad that he would not himself have taken up arms to defend it.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ONTARIO—No 1

THE "PASS" OF TORONTO.

BY G. MERCER ADAM.

When civilization first seriously invaded the sanctuaries of Nature in the region of what is now the fair city of Toronto, the startled on lookers were a flock of wild fowl and a couple of families of the children of the wood. At the time we speak of, in the beautiful basin of Toronto, if we except the noiseless movements during the hours of day of one or two Mississaga Indians, solitude reigned supreme. When the sun went down even Nature became still. As night fell upon the scene the pines ceased their moaning, and naught was heard save the occasional splash of beaver or musquash in the waters of the forest-screened harbor, or the cry of the wood-duck, as it took flight for its evening haunt in the recesses of the woods. But

THE YEAR 1793,

which we are accustomed to speak of as that of the founding of the capital of Ontario, was what may be called the medieval era in Toronto's annals, for the place had an earlier history. This history is spread over the fateful period of the dominion of France in Canada, in connection with her commerce with the Indians and with the thrilling story of the Jesuit missions.

The early years of the seventeenth century were big with enterprise. The New World for the first time saw a fringe of colonies fasten upon its coast. In 1607 Virginia was colonized by Sir Walter Raleigh; in 1608 Champlain founded Quebec; and in the following year New York was settled by the Dutch. To these settlements, in 1620, was added that of Massachusetts, after the historic landing of the "Pilgrim Fathers." From the French colony at Quebec came the first attempt to penetrate the continent, though the Dutch soon made their way up the Hudson and established a post at Orange (Albany). New York State at this period was the lair of the Iroquois, while Canada, in the main, was the hunting-ground of the Algonquians and Hurons. The former were scattered along the banks of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa, while the home of the latter was the country lying immediately to the north of Toronto and skirting the waters of the lake that bears their name. Between the Hurons and their deadly enemy, the Iroquois, lay the Neutrals, a nation that with the Huron tribe the Confederacy of the Iroquois was ere long to wipe out of existence. In 1615 Champlain, with his Jesuit following, made his eventful voyage up the Ottawa, crossed Lake Nipissing, and paddled down the French River to that inland sea of the Wyandots, which he called *la mer des Hurons*. Descending the Georgian Bay he came upon the country of the Hurons, among whom for a time he tarried. Here, in what is now known as the Matchedash Peninsula,