

caped the infliction of pains and penalties by giving up the writer ensconced behind a *nom de plume*, as in the case of Mr. Sewell, who lost the Solicitor-Generalship for venturing, under a pseudonym, to criticize the Government of which he was an officer. It would be, of course, an endless and unprofitable undertaking to trace the authorship of the great bulk of pseudonymous productions in early Canadian journals on political subjects. But one *nom de plume* which appeared in the columns of the *Montreal Herald*, in the years 1813-15, presents exceptional claims to consideration. The signature of VERITAS has become historical. Moreover, it possessed for a time an additional degree of interest from the slight mystery and uncertainty which attached to it, the author having taken some pains, as I suppose, to maintain an incognito. As all persons concerned have long passed off the scene, no harm will be done now if I remove the veil, as I shall do presently, and for the first time since an uncertainty on the subject sprang up.

Sir George Prevost was the Governor-General of Canada and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in 1812, when the war broke out between Great Britain and the United States, and the letters of Veritas are devoted to an adverse criticism of Sir George's military tactics throughout the unnatural contest. In many of the subsequent accounts of the war of 1812, Veritas is quoted as an authority, but I do not observe anywhere that the real name of the writer is mentioned. It became, in fact, as we shall see, almost irretrievably lost. So late as 1855, after all reason for secrecy had passed away, Auchinleck, in his "History of the War, '12, '13, '14," defends Sir George Prevost against the strictures of the shadowy Veritas. "Veritas observes," he says, "that it is the acme of assurance to insinuate that the [British] Ministry were to blame for the insufficiency [of force in the two Provinces at the outbreak of the war], especially as they could only have a knowledge of our wants through Sir George's information. Now, how, in justice," Auchinleck asks, "can Sir George be blamed for not informing Ministers of his requirements for a war which he was instructed [by that Ministry] by all the means in his power to avoid the promotion of? In his anxiety to attack the movers of the address [to Sir

George, on his departure from Quebec] in reference to the war, Veritas has suffered himself to go to the verge of injustice." Again, in Col. W. F. Coffin's admirable and eloquent work, entitled "1812; or the War and its Moral: a Canadian Chronicle," it is observed, "If York (Toronto) had been left defenceless and unprotected; if a ship of war in the hands of the shipwright had been recklessly exposed to destruction, the fault was not with Sheaffe nor with his direct superior, Sir George Prevost, as charged by Veritas, but with the authorities in England, who trifled with the emergency until too late, and then spent treasures in life and money to repair an irreparable error."

In Tupper's "Life and Letters of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock," Veritas is also largely quoted, but in the same abstract way. The author of an article in the *Quarterly Review* of July, 1822, headed "Campaigns in the Canadas," evidently knew who Veritas was; but he refrains from naming him. "The Letters of Veritas," the writer says, "were originally printed in a weekly paper published at Montreal, in Lower Canada, and subsequently collected in the little volume before us. Within a small compass," the reviewer continues, "these unpretending letters contain a greater body of useful information upon the campaigns in the Canadas than is anywhere else to be found. They are, we believe, the production of a gentleman in Montreal of known respectability. Though not a military man, he enjoyed the best opportunities for acquaintance with the circumstances of the war; and as these letters, which excited great attention in the Canadas, appeared in successive papers while Montreal was filled with almost all the officers of rank who had served in the country, it may reasonably be presumed that his errors, had he committed any, would not have escaped without censure; yet no reply was ever attempted to his statements—no doubt ever expressed in the provinces of the correctness of his assertions." My curiosity, a few years since, having become aroused as to the identity of Veritas, it came to be with me, for a time, a kind of Junius-question which I sought to solve: for a long time, but not, finally, without success. I searched in vain in the useful works of Mr. H. J. Morgan, of Ottawa, the compiler of "Sketches of Celebrated Canadians," and the *Bibliotheca Canadensis*,