

Truth's Contributors.

THE CANAL REBELLION OF 1838.

REMINISCENCES OF AN EYE WITNESS.

BY JOHN FRASER, MONTREAL.
NO. 4.

Saturday morning, the 11th of November, 1838.—The preparation of batteaux and barges this morning at the village of Lachine was evidence of some important move to advance either on Chateaugay or Beauharnois. The men looked to their guns and accoutrements to be ready for any sudden call. These batteaux were used that night to cross to Caughnawaga, as stated in our last paper in TRUTH.

The bugle sound to muster was a daily call. At the muster this morning a demand was made for twenty-five volunteers to take charge of the steamer to the Cascades with the arms and clothing for the Glengarries. Every man in the ranks stepped forward to go. The requisite number was soon selected and marched on board—the writer among them.

During the previous few days news had reached us of the gallant affairs by the frontier volunteers at Lacolle and Odelltown. Stray reports had come that the American sympathizers were collecting in force at Ogdensburg to cross to Prescott, when they heard that the Glengarry Highlanders had left Upper Canada. The next week brought news how our Brookville and Prescott boys acquitted themselves so nobly at the battle of the Wind Mill Point, at Prescott. Several hundreds of lives were sacrificed in these different battles. Men of the present day know little of the sufferings and hardships endured by the volunteers of those days. Every man bore himself proudly as if the fate of the empire rested on his good old musket and his well-filled cartouche box!

All on board: it was a little puffing steamer, not much larger than one of these small tugs to be now seen on our canals during the summer. There were many anxious eyes cast after us and many good wishes expressed for our safe return. The reader will remember that it was on the previous Saturday that the steamer "Henry Brougham" was captured by the patriots, and our little steamer with its precious load of arms and clothing was just starting to pass over the same waters, with enemies everywhere around us.

This was our first sail on Lake St. Louis, in fact it was our first sail on a steamer. The water was smooth, without a ripple. The boys being up for a lark, having learned that the patriots had no cannon, "held a council of war," and ordered all the mattresses in the boat to be carried to the deck, with which they lined the side of the steamer facing the shore, as a protection from bullets, and then prevailed upon the captain to run close into the Beauharnois shore, just out of gun-shot reach. It was a mad prank! Had the patriots known the value of our cargo, and the weakness of the guard, they might—being 3,000 to 4,000 strong—have captured the whole of us. We passed within a mile of the town; the patriots were seen in hundreds on the shore. They remained silent spectators of our onward course, doubtless wondering who or what we were. Poor fellows! they were ignorant of our mission and of our weakness, and also of the fate which befel them before the dawn of the next morning!

In due course, just about dusk, we approached the cascades, slowly and cautiously steaming up to the old mill steamer

wharf. We did not know who were there; on nearing it we recognized the bonnets of the Glengarries. To our cheer theirs in response came. We then learned that a company of them had been left in charge of the village. It appears now nearly incredible that these men were there for three days without hearing a word from Lachine; communication was interrupted.

We learned from them that the Glengarries had been looking for us ever since the previous Thursday, and on that morning (Saturday) had crossed the St. Lawrence at Hungry Bay, above Coteau du lac, to march down on Beauharnois. The captain of the company would not receive the arms and clothing from us, his force being too small, he said, to protect them. We were therefore obliged to keep them on board.

Night closed in. It was clear and cold. Our position was not a very comfortable one. We had to keep a strict guard all night—no sleep. We were within some five miles of the patriot camp. What if they had known our position and had had pluck? In preparing to make ourselves comfortable for the night, fancy our surprise to find that we had left Lachine without laying in provisions of any kind, not even, as our old drill sergeant said, *having one ration of grog for him!* There was not a loaf of bread nor even a biscuit to be had in the village, the Glengarries had eaten them clean out. Some of us did not get a bite for thirty six hours, not till after our return to Lachine the next afternoon.

The little steamer's deck was our home that night, hungry but not cold, for we had plenty of firewood. Bye and bye, as darkness set in, our eyes were strained to catch any movement on the Beauharnois side of the St. Lawrence. Moving, flickering flashes were to be seen here and there on the opposite shore; what were these? It was soon discovered, or, at least, we believed these lights to indicate the line of march of the Glengarry men, nearly 2,000 strong. The flashes we attributed to the reflection of the moonlight on their guns.

Nigh on fifty years have come and gone since that eventful night when we paced the deck of our little steamer close by the old wharf at the Cascades. Let us try and picture our then dangerous position, which at the time and under the consequent excitement we did not seriously realize. Within some five miles of us was the chief patriot camp of about 4,000 men. They had it in their power, had they had courage, to capture our boat, cargo, and the whole of our little band of twenty-five! We ought not to have remained over night with our valuable cargo in so dangerous and exposed a position. We should have steamed back to Lachine.

As night grew on apace our gaze was constantly directed to the march of the Glengarries; at times their line of march would be lost to view by some curve or other obstruction of the road, thence emerging they marched steadily onward, in regular order, or apparently so to us, from our distant, midnight view point. The sight or scene was grand beyond description! Our knowledge that they were the Glengarries was gathered from the guard in the village, otherwise we would have put them down as a body of the patriots on some midnight expedition.

We passed a sleepless, anxious night, constantly on the watch. Nothing worthy of note occurred, except that a small boat twice appeared near us by the shore, with a couple of men in it. This gave us no concern at the time as they pretended to belong to the village.

After the dispersion of the patriot camp we learned, to our astonishment, that our position had been visited that night, and that an attack was planned and would have been made on us early on Sunday morning by a body of picked men from the patriot camp. The march of the Glengarry men and their arrival in the neighborhood of Beauharnois about midnight of Saturday diverted the attention of the patriots to matters nearer their own home and saved us from falling into their hands.

The return home and our visit to Beauharnois on Sunday morning will appear in our next.

UNDER THE FIGTREE;
OR, LIFE IN BARBADOS.—NO. 2.

BY REV. H. W. ATTWATER.

In the hope that my first paper respecting Barbados Island may have proved of sufficient interest to the readers of TRUTH to justify me in inflicting another, I venture upon a few notes on the social, as influenced by the religious life, of the natives. "Under the Figtree" is not intended to be suggestive of any comparison of the said natives with the one who originally merited an encomium from the highest source for his guilelessness; but in fact quite the reverse, as the figtree in this case is associated with a circumstance which has a prior date. The bearded figtree of Barbados is that from which it derives its name, given it by the Portuguese, and is said to be a tree of the same genus as that from which our first parents obtained the aprons, and the matting suspended from the branches, and formed of intertwined twigs, certainly would answer the purpose. The religion of the Island, regarded as a profession of adherence to some particular form, was divided at the last census amongst the following: Church of England, 151,000; Wesleyan, 13,000; Moravian, 5,000; Roman Catholic, 524; Jews, 23; and not stated nearly 1000.

All denominations rest on an equal basis in relation to Government support, which is in the ratio of their numerical status.

Notwithstanding the bitter hatred, and THE STRONG PREJUDICE existing in the Island against "color," the Government liberally provides the very best educational facilities and religious opportunities for the blacks, although, of course, the number of places of worship is out of proportion to the density of the population. As a consequence of this, where ordinary efforts are made by the clergy to promote the religious welfare of the people, the churches are crowded to excess, and applications, backed up by a tender of the requisite four shillings, are made in vain for eighteen inches of space in the church; whilst indifference, or apathy, the result of a settled conviction that the blacks are unworthy of attention, produce their natural results. The effects of education, and especially religious education, upon the Congo or Ponga mind, are various, and certainly embrace self-confidence. In his lowest state, the negro is, in his own estimation, the equal of the white; with intellect developed, where there is capacity for development, he becomes infinitely superior, and speaks of the "poor buccra" with contempt. In the educational institution, it is found that the intellectual power of the black (none of the best at any time) wanes early; whilst those who have an admixture of white blood—(no uncommon thing in Barbados)—excel their white brethren. Hence colored men are found in the ranks of the legal and other professions in the Island, one of them filling at present, with credit, the position of Attorney Gen-

eral. Socially, however, the line of demarcation is clearly drawn, and there is no intercourse between the whites and blacks, the former meeting the latter only in their counting houses on equal terms; but occasionally some erratic "buccra" violates the social code, (as in the case of two clerics) and incurs ostracism from society by hymeneal union with the colored or black people.

The religion of the negro does not depend upon the particular church, and no denomination can attribute the erratic tendencies of the members of other churches to the system under which they are trained, as is too frequently the case with the narrow-minded votaries of the multifarious religious systems of warring Christendom. This argument, if admitted, could be used with greater force against Christianity as a whole by atheists and infidels. Emotionalism is found about as safe a test of piety amongst the untutored Africans as it is when found at a modern camp-meeting or revival; as good a test, in fact, as is the being "a communicant," or "member of the church," etc., the expression in vogue amongst those who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. The religious negro will, as a general thing, on his way home from a participation in the means of grace, steal his neighbor's yams, or slaughter his pet ewe lamb, yet there are some amongst them whose morality is not inferior to that of any people, but they are rarely found, and one cannot expect much, perhaps, from a people just emancipated from slavery. The improvement in the moral condition of the negroes, indeed, would seem to be in the inverse ratio to the opportunities of improvement, as an aged Rural Dean and Rector informed me that when he took charge of his parish thirty years previously, he could safely appoint any member of his congregation to a position of trust in a parochial society, but that at the present time it would be difficult to find one. With all the religious advantages and educational facilities provided by the direction of beneficent Imperial authority for the amelioration of the condition of the manumitted slaves, there can be little doubt but that, if left to themselves,

THE NEGROES OF BARBADOS,

or any of the other islands, would be little better in a few years than the Haytian, whose human sacrifices, in preservation of their heathen superstitions, are well known to the authorities, though no steps are taken to prevent them. While "Obiah" retains the hold it has at present on the negro mind, all else in the domain of religious influence, must be subservient to it. The belief in, and practice of this superstition, are found in all the West Indian Islands, but perhaps may be seen in greatest perfection in Trinidad, as described by Kingaley. In Barbados, the operations of the Obiah doctors are limited, owing to the stringent measures adopted for its suppression. It is no uncommon thing, though, to find that the anxiety for the sacred ordinances is based upon the conviction that the influence of Obiah will thus be counteracted. Neither are cases rare in which a white-do negro, finding the three white heads in a triangular position before his door in the morning, together with a coffin of rusty nails, and feathers, at once experiences the pain, which, existing only in imagination, yet forbodes death, or some calamity, unless the gods be at once propitiated by a sacrifice of his crop of yams and sweet potatoes to the cupidity of the Obiah doctors. As the priest of Osiris was the termination of the worship, unknown to the Egyptian devotee, whose intellectuality