

# 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 III.

Cambray and Waterworth enter into Partnership—  
Appearance and character of Cambray—A method  
of gaining at raffles—The lumber trade—The  
Skimmers—The Lion's share—Cambray marries—  
His wife—His father.

"I remained the winter at my father's in Broughton, and early in the spring, 1834, I returned to Quebec, where I saw Cambray, who again urged me to enter into partnership with him, a proceeding I finally adopted, though not without much hesitation.

"One day he announced to me that he had hired a house in St. Rochs, where we both took up our quarters on the first day of May. He also informed me about the same time that he was engaged to a young Canadian girl, of whom he said he was greatly enamoured.

"Cambray at that time lived well, spent a good deal of money, speculated largely, and was, generally speaking, looked up to by the class of people with whom he associated, who were surprised that a young man commencing business could find so much money and meet with such great success. The consequence was, that he had many friends, and was visited and esteemed by the most respectable of people.

"Cambray is about my age, much more robust in figure, but scarcely as tall. He has a well-shaped head, regular features, is strongly set, broad shouldered, easy in gait, engaging in manner, light-hearted, and pleasing in his address, that is, when his object is to entrap or deceive you. But when agitated by his violent passions, when plotting a conspiracy, when seeking rather to overthrow than avoid the obstacles that may intervene between him and his purpose, his appearance becomes totally changed. His habitual mask of hypocrisy falls and you have before you a frightful spectre; his eyes sink into his head, and sparkle with hellish fire; his forehead becomes seamed with wrinkles, and the muscles of his face twitch so violently that they seem almost ready to snap asunder. His half-opened mouth moves convulsively from side to side, his thin lips become livid and quivering, and his teeth gnash most fearfully.

"This picture may appear overdrawn to those who have not seen this man under the influence of his evil nature, but not to those who have watched the rising fury of his heart; not to those who have seen him whispering his dreams of blood into the ear of a hired assassin—wrapped in the mysteries of a conspiracy, or executing his evil deeds by the glimmer of a dark lantern. These can affirm the truth of my statements; and let those who doubt, visit him within the walls of his prison where he can have no possible interest in misleading them, and there speak the convictions of the moment.

"But the most powerful, I might almost say the only passion of this man, that on which all others are based, in which all his feelings centre, the great lever of his every thought and action, is the love of gain—the desire of acquiring wealth

—covetousness—the ambition of becoming rich. This is the leading trait in his character; to this he owes all the hypocrisy and deceit of his career. But among other peculiarities we might reckon, his astonishing success in games of activity—his jovial humour—his incessant babbling—his imperious bearing—his absolute indifference to the feelings of others—his powerful will and resolute courage. Indeed, were it not for the unmanly vice of hypocrisy, he possesses many noble attributes, for generally speaking, his actions were conducted on a large scale; his enterprises being extensive and hazardous.

"I must avow, however, that I cannot speak of him with impartiality, so great has been his power over me. Still, it must not be supposed that he was addicted to the low and shameful vices of the vulgar; on the contrary his manners were far from dissolute, and never in the course of my intimacy with him, have I seen him in a state of intoxication. He was deeply attached to gambling, and games requiring manual dexterity, and he was remorseless in the exercise of the art of juggling, in which he was thoroughly versed.

"After my arrival from Broughton, I know that he several times attempted to entrap his friends, among whom were some of the most respectable citizens of St. Rochs. and to such an extent did he carry it, that many began to suspect that he was not strictly honorable in his dealings.

"On one occasion, when preparing to move into the house he had hired in St. Rochs, he held a raffle of certain effects, for which he said he had no use, and which, in value, he said, amounted to about fifteen or twenty pounds. At his raffle he had the luck to win back almost everything. This will not however, appear very extraordinary when the reader is informed that he made use of loaded dice, a practice he pursued with such rare dexterity, that he could glide the dice in or out of the boxes as rapidly as he pleased. Several of his companions present at the time, appeared to place but little belief in such strange good luck, and could not help murmuring in an under tone, but none of them attempted to give public expression to their sentiments, for it was dangerous to question the probity of a man whom the community at large held in such high respect. But when his dupes had left, his father reproached him sharply for his trickery, and for holding a course which could only terminate in shame and infamy. On this occasion the old man spoke as if he had had other proofs of his son's speculations. This did not seem to have been the first lecture he had received on the chapter of honesty.

"On the opening of the navigation we commenced the lumber trade in partnership, and on a rather extensive scale for us. To recount all the tricks, frauds, smugglings, doings, jobs and bargains we had recourse to during that summer, would take up far too much of our time; suffice it to say that scarcely a night passed without our securing a good haul of wood. One of our practices was to cut, at high tide, the fastenings of the cribs with which vessels are loaded, and await the result some distance below; as the tide descended, our booty descended with it, and always found us ready for its reception.

"Another portion of our operations consisted in bribing the guides of the large rafts, from Upper Canada, who gave us their master's goods at a very low valuation. Again we had a number of skimmers, as they were called, of which I was chief; they visited the coasts after stormy weather. Then we employed a gang of labourers, whose duty consisted in effacing the various brands from the wood which fell into our possession.

"This dangerous traffic often failed to be profitable, and gave us a great deal of trouble;

many came to inquire after lost property, and to claim what they considered to be theirs. In such cases, however, the effrontery and brusque manner of Cambray always succeeded in diverting them from their purpose, glad to be quit of him at any cost.

"I remember that one week we sold the same lot of wood three times over, and twice to the same individual. It is true, we had considerable opposition in this line of business, but with this exception, things went very smoothly. I have no doubt that, at the end of the season, our profits were large; but of this I cannot speak with certainty, having received but a very small portion.

"My partner, perceiving my love for pleasure and dissipation, and my inclination to indulge in drink, very wisely observed that it would be more to my advantage to leave my entire gains in his hands till the termination of the fall business, when I could receive the whole amount at once. This I allowed myself to be persuaded into, and from that moment Cambray kept the accounts of the firm altogether in his own hands. When the time came to render me an account of the same, all the books had disappeared, and by way of a statement, I had to content myself with an illegible scrawl, together with the good round sum of two pounds. Previous to this I had received five pounds, so that it turned out that I had risked my reputation, and in many instances my life, during a whole summer, for the sum of seven pounds. However, I had to put up with it, for to have reasoned with him would have been madness.

"In the course of that summer Cambray made several gains in cock-fighting, but he also lost more than he gained. One day, disconcerted with a recent loss, he said to me, "Why am I such a fool as to continue betting in this manner—why cannot I content myself with the dice-box—game cocks are not plumped as easy as dice—it will take many a good throw to make up for my losses. To avoid the necessity of paying these losses in future, he transferred his effects to me, that is until he married, when he made over everything to his wife.

"His wife was young, respectably connected, mild, amiable, honest, and loved her husband to distraction, but she sought rather too much to acquire an influence over him. It was astonishing that this man, so imperious and so violent towards others, yielded with such good grace to her every caprice, and indeed almost allowed himself to be guided by her. Still, I thought he was not perfectly sincere in his submission; that a great part of it was only feigned, the better to conceal his real character. Be this as it may, she was certainly mistress in the house; out of it, however, he indulged in tricks on which her opinion would certainly have been received with very little favour. One day having taunted him on his amiable weakness, he coolly replied: "If I find her troublesome, I know a remedy." They appeared to live very contented, but he did not act with the same courtesy towards his father; at times even going so far as to administer slight corporal punishment, when the good man, who was rather given to moralize, touched too acutely upon the foibles of his son.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. A—A dialogue—An expedition to the Island of Orleans—Two blunders—Burglary at Mr. Atkinson's.

"To my misfortune I once knew a Mrs. A—Her husband, with whom I had been intimate, had been dead several years. This woman kept a little tavern in the St. Lewis suburbs, where I occasionally resorted to pass an evening, and