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LITERATURE.

EIGHT YEARS IN CANADA, &c.

EMBRACING A REVIEW OF THE SEVERAL ADMINISTRATIONS OF LORDS DURHAM AND SYDENHAM, SIR CHARLES BAGOT, AND LORD METCALFE;

And Dedicated to the Memories of THE FIRST AND LAST OF THESE DISTINGUISHED DEAD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ECARTE," &c.

DE OMNIBUS REBUS ET QUIBUSDAM ALIIS.

[A difficulty of arrangement having occurred with the only two London publishers to whom the following pages have been submitted, the Author has decided on reversing the usual practice, and publishing in Canada first, thus affording that means of direct communication with other metropolitan publishers, which his absence from London renders a matter of much inconvenience. It will be borne in mind, therefore, by the Canadian reader, that what is now offered to his perusal, was intended for an English public.]

[37 Deposited at the Office of the Registrar of the Province.]

(CHAPTER VI. CONTINUED.)

This person had been arrested while in the act of exciting the people to rebellion, and although a Scotch Canadian, represented himself as an American General, stating that his countrymen had everywhere risen in arms, with a view of assisting the oppressed Canadians, from whom they expected a corresponding exertion. While on his way up, in custody, he accosted Sir James McDonell, the commander of the brigade, and claiming relationship with him (he bore the same name), requested him to interpose his influence in his favor. The veteran was exceedingly indignant, and told him that if he was a McDonell and relative, which he very much doubted, he was the first of the family who had ever disgraced himself by turning traitor to his Sovereign—consequently that he might expect neither favor or protection from him. On being landed at Montreal, General McDonell (the younger) met with no such flattering reception as greeted his relative. He was known in the city which was indeed his place of abode, and it required all the vigilance of the small detachment of Guards, composing his escort, to prevent him from being stoned to death by the exasperated populace. As it was, he received several severe blows from missiles, and such was the animosity with which he was followed that the Guards were compelled to ensure his safety by entering the barrack yard of the Royals, the gates of which were with difficulty closed against the threatening crowd. While here, he fainted as much from shame as from fatigue and bodily pain, and fell to the ground partly dragging with him an American sympathizer, (Isaac Negus) a contractor, who had been taken with him, and to whose wrist his own was manacled. A cart with a little straw was then procured, and in this humiliating manner, and chained to one who had more the appearance of a convict than anything else, the man who had filled a respectable situation in Montreal was conveyed amid the hootings and insults of his fellow townsmen, (and among whom there were many well dressed people,) for upwards of a mile to the already thronged prison of the city.

At the period of his capture, several papers of the highest importance were, independently of a box containing flags and commissions for aspirants in the Patriot army, found in his possession. What these papers were has never publicly transpired, but so important were they considered by the party who arrested him at Nicolet, where he was taken into custody, that they were immediately conveyed to Sir John Colborne. Soon after their receipt, a rumor was spread abroad that among these papers had been found a plan for the summary disposal, by the leaders of the rebellion, of the principal loyal merchants of the city. The Jews—and they are numerous in Montreal—were, according to this statement, to have been completely proscribed. Mr. Benjamin Hart, a wealthy merchant of that persuasion, was to have been elevated to a gibbet.—The Montreal Water Works, the property of Mr. Hayes, another wealthy Jewish merchant, was to have been

confiscated to the use of the Provincial Government, while the proprietor himself, with numerous other Christian merchants, were to have been kept as prisoners until ransomed at high prices, to benefit the Provincial Government also. Hence the bitterness with which Mr. McDonell, who was a lawyer in good practice at Montreal, was visited by the inhabitants of the city generally, as above shown. It was further stated that his house, situated in an obscure street in the Fauburg St. Antoine, and principally adapted from its locale, for purposes of secrecy, was the great theatre at which the rebel chiefs had been in the habit of holding their midnight conferences.*

On the same day (the 7th,) there was a partial rising at Terrebonne, but this, the inhabitants being generally well affected, was speedily put down.

On the 8th, Sir John Colborne and his staff, with the Brigade of Guards, crossed over to Laprairie, in the midst of a drenching rain which was the more unexpected as there had been a severe frost the preceding day. The whole force then moved on to St. John's. Meanwhile, that morning, the insurgents commanded by a Doctor Nelson—the only person who, as well as Mr. Bouchette, seems to have evinced any spirit or resolution during the rebellion—eager to repair the reverse sustained by the rebels on the 6th, returned to the attack of the small militia force at Odeltown, but again sustained a signal defeat, and were compelled to retire upon their head quarters at Napierville.

The following day (the 9th,) was devoted by Sir John Colborne to the completion of his dispositions for attack, and on the 10th the main body of the troops advanced upon Napierville—Colonel Love with the 73rd moving and arriving nearly at the same time from St. Valentine, in an opposite direction. On reaching Napierville, they found that the enemy had fled, two thousand having evacuated the place the preceding day, and the remainder of the force only two hours before the troops entered. The 7th Hussars were sent in pursuit, but did not come up with them.

This delay of five days, from the 6th to the 10th inclusive, when the troops could have been pushed on to Napierville in two nights, might, had the rebellion attained any serious height, have proved disastrous in the extreme. The destruction of this force, which contained the chief strength and sinew of the insurgents, was of paramount importance, not only as paralyzing their present measures, but because its dispersion by the bayonet could not fail to discourage them from future attempts. Fortunately, however, the country was not so ripe for open revolt as the leaders desired, and although, as will be seen later, the American sympathizers were, as had been concerted, on the move to second their efforts, their natural indolence of character prevented them from following up any advantage that might have resulted to them from the dilatory movements of the troops. In all probability Sir John Colborne anticipated the dispersion which followed, and indisposed to the unnecessary shedding of blood, especially where an undisciplined and misguided rabble were his opponents, had rather preferred making such a display of his preparations as would awe them into submission. The strong humanity of his character forcibly adds to this belief. His enemies have accused him of being blood-thirsty and cruel. Never was there a more unjust or ungrounded

* The account here given of the circumstances connected with Mr. McDonell's capture varies somewhat from what appears in my notes taken on the very day of his being brought into Montreal, and for this reason. On looking over these a few days ago, I came to that portion of them which alludes briefly to the second rebellion, and feeling that it would be an act of delicacy as well as of justice to acquaint Mr. McDonell with my intention to publish what was an essential portion of my subject, I sent him a copy of the remarks immediately relating to himself, with a note stating that, unless good reasons could be shown to throw a doubt upon its truth, it would appear as a part and parcel of my short summary of the events of the rebellion. From Mr. McDonell I received the reply which is subjoined, and from the statement of its inaccuracy charged upon me, I have since been led to make a more minute inquiry into the matter, from which has resulted the statement which appears above, and which varies slightly from that of which I forwarded to him a copy—I need scarcely add that, had Mr. McDonell's communication supplied me with any good reason for the entire suppression of the paragraph, I should have made the sacrifice of historical truth to a disinclination to give pain where I could perceive pain was likely to result from the prosecution of a contrary course:—

"Mr. McDonell has to acknowledge the receipt of a note from _____, enclosing an extract purporting to be 'a portion of his remarks upon the rebellion,'—no, Mr. McDonell, can of course exercise no influence on _____'s conduct in this matter, but has to inform him that almost every word of the said extract, having reference to his, Mr. McDonell's, arrest in 1838, is either false or exaggerated—evidently, in short, the absurd rumour of the day.
Montreal, 27th October, 1846."