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THE LETTERS OF VERITAS.\*

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CANADA, both in its French and its English portions, has had a troubled history. With a very mixed population, teeming with a variety of clashing prejudices, brought with them, or inherited, from the old world, governors sent out by the parent state to guide their destinies, to amalgamate them into one mass, to mould their character into a national consistency, have found, especially in years bygone, that their task was not an easy or a trifling one; and whatever their line of conduct, they were sure to be criticized with severity by one coterie or another in the community. Here, as elsewhere, the newspapers and other local periodicals have been vents for the spleen of individuals; and as at early periods in Canada, Upper and Lower, men in power held it to be proper to stand on their dignity more punctiliously than they do now, it was not quite safe for writers to come out with their strictures *in propria personâ*. Consequently, the local periodicals of the day abound with objurgatory communications under the fictitious signatures usually adopted in the news-

papers and periodicals of the same period in Great Britain and Ireland. And when I say in former days men in power were specially touchy, I include in the expression the Houses of Assembly themselves, which were very ready to summon offenders before them for verbal breaches of privilege. Thus Mr. Cary, Editor of the *Quebec Mercury*, was sent for by the Lower Canadian House, in 1813, for publishing a communication signed "Juniolus Canadensis," an invective, in the style of Junius, against Mr. Stuart, a member of the House. Mr. Cary absented himself from the city during the remainder of the Session, and so eluded the search of the Serjeant-at-Arms. But the day after the prorogation the following Card appeared in the *Mercury*: "The Editor's respects to a majority of the House of Assembly. Being just arrived from a tour of business, he learns that the House had evinced much anxiety to see him during his absence. Unfortunately, his return has taken place a day too late for him to have the honour of waiting on the House. He is, however, rather at a loss to conceive how his presence could be in any manner useful in assisting them in their vocation of framing laws." Sometimes an editor es-

From "Some Canadian *Noms-de-Plume* identified, with samples of the writings to which they are appended"—a Paper read before the Canadian Institute, Toronto, Jan. 15, 1876.