

## CANADA'S FIRST PRINTER.

The following paper, contributed to the *Quebec Chronicle*, by Dr. Hubert Neilson, M.D., contains so much that is worth reading and keeping that we transfer it to our columns:—

William Brown was born in the parish of Borgne, Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland, in the year 1737 or 1738. His father was Laird of Langlands. The family, although not wealthy, held an excellent social position, in the country. One of his cousins married an Earl of Dalhousie and became the mother of the Lord Dalhousie, who was at one time Governor-General of Canada. William being a younger son was sent, when only 15 years of age, to some of his mother's relations, planters in Virginia, there to seek his fortunes. We find him however, in 1752-53, pursuing his classical studies at the celebrated William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia. He subsequently entered a banking house managed by the then Mayor of Williamsburg. This establishment appears to have collapsed in 1755 during the financial crisis brought on by the war with the French. Brown was thrown entirely on his own resources; whether his friends were unwilling or unable to assist him—or whether he refused to be further indebted to them for assistance is not evident. Opportunity or taste led him to elect the printer's trade. He is next found as an apprentice in Wm. Dunlop's Printing House and Bookstore in Philadelphia: this Dunlop was Post Master of his city as well, and brother-in-law of Benj. Franklin; both befriended Brown who proved himself worthy of their esteem and a most industrious and quick apprentice. In 1760 he was sent by Dunlop to manage large printing and bookselling interests he possessed in Bridgetown, Barbadoes. In 1763 he had to relinquish this appointment on account of ill health, and at this time formed the project of coming to Quebec, which had recently become a British province by conquest and treaty, thinking that its climate would suit him better. His small savings were invested in the scheme, Dunlop approved of it and advanced the additional funds required. Thomas Gilmore, a native of Pennsylvania, and a fellow apprentice of Brown, was selected as partner, and in September, 1763, sent to London to purchase the complete equipment of a printing office, with instructions to sail for Quebec the following spring on the first vessel from London.

Brown started on his overland journey to Quebec on the 23rd of August, 1763, bringing with him the printed prospectus of the paper to be called the *Quebec Gazette*, which he proposed publishing the ensuing summer. It is to be surmised that Brown had ascertained, before hand, how his scheme would be viewed by the then military and autocratic Government of the new Provinces. Brown's diary during his travels northward, mostly through the wilderness, is most interesting in its details of the difficulties and dangers he encountered, of his equipment, expenses and incidents along the road. I now have it opened before me as I write. Quebec was reached at the end of September. He spent the Autumn and winter there, distributing his prospectus in the town and environs, canvassing for subscribers, varying the monotony of the long winter evenings with the study of the French language, beside making all necessary arrangements for the installation for the anxiously expected press. Its arrival was delayed until the first week in June.\* Meanwhile Brown's efforts had not been over-encouraging, having secured but 150 subscribers out of the 300 he deemed necessary to make a start with.

At last, on the 21st of June, 1764—*The Quebec Gazette*, *La Gazette de Quebec*, printed in French and English—the first output of the Canadian press—made its appearance, published and “printed by Brown & Gilmore, at the printing office, St. Louis street, two doors above the Secretary's office.” The proximity of the printing office to official quarters leads one to suspect that the *Gazette* was, from the first, well under the fostering wing and eye of the “powers that were.” If further proofs need be produced I may add that General Murray

subscribed and paid for ten copies, his secretary for five, etc., etc.

To the printing business the partners soon added a well equipped booksellers' and stationers' establishment. With Brown's industry and enterprise (and the absence of competitors) prosperity smiled on the firm; not so harmony, for Brown's appears to have been sorely tried by the shiftless ways in which his partner drifted. The partnership, however, held together until Gilmore's death in 1772. In 1774 Brown had bought out Gilmore's widow's shares in the business and he continued to manage it alone up to his death, which happened suddenly on the 22nd of March, 1789. The supply of stationery and printing for the Army during the war of Independence, gave Brown the opportunity of making a golden harvest—his estate was valued at over £15,000 sterling in 1789.

A complete list and description of his imprints is yet to be made. His work as a printer has always been highly praised. Coupled with his enterprise, he may rightly be called the Caxton of Canada. Of him as a man and citizen I find but words of the highest praise; his business integrity was proverbial, his charity and generosity, were equally noted. King George had no more loyal subject. During the memorable siege of Quebec in 1775-76, he shouldered his musket on the walls of the city. He died a bachelor.

H. N.

\* The lever of this press may be seen in the Museum of the Literary and Historical Society.

† This paper was merged into the *QUEBEC MORNING CHRONICLE*, in 1875, after an existence of one hundred and eleven years.—Editor *Chronicle*. But why is not the old name kept by the *Chronicle* as a sub-title?—Editor *DOMINION ILLUSTRATED*.

## HISTORIC GRAVES.

A few days since the *Quebec Chronicle*, which has a watchful eye on such relics and curiosities, gave an account of some of the graves in the old Protestant burial ground of the ancient garrison town, copying some of the inscriptions on the stones.

Here is the record on a small dark stone, guarding the remains of Sir Walter's favourite brother:

Sacred  
To the memory of  
Thomas Scott, Esquire,  
Late Paymaster  
of the 70th  
Regiment,  
Who departed this life  
4th February,  
1823.  
And his daughter,  
Barbara Scott,  
who died  
on the 5th October,  
1821,  
in the 8th year  
of her age.

The following inscription is singular as being double, and in memory of an officer of the memorable campaign of 1759:

“Ci git le corps d'Alexandre Cameron, Officier de Dientgallon en Ecosse, qui mourut de la Fièvre en cet endroit, au mois d'Aout, 1759, servant alors son Roi et sa Patrie. Les Lieutenants-Colonels Mairn et Malcolm Fraser ont élevé ce monument à la Mémoire de leur ami et de leur Frère.”

“This stone is put here by Lieut.-Colonel Mairn and Lieut.-Col. Fraser in memory of their dear friend and much respected brother officer, Alex. Cameron, Esquire, of Dientgallon, in Scotland, who died of a fever on this spot in August, 1759, when in service of his king and country, and is here interred.”

The Gores seem to have been a large military family in Canada, during the first half of this century. Beside the Colonel Gore, who commanded at the village of St. Denis, on the Richelieu, on the 24th November, 1837, and was repulsed by the insurgents, we have, in the following lines, the death-roll of three others of the name:

Lieutenant  
Colonel Ralph Gore,  
of Barrowmount, Goresbridge,  
Ireland.  
Died at Quebec, January 30th, 1827, aged 64.  
His sons,  
Capt. Ralph Gore, 33 Regiment,  
Died at Quebec, Aug. 27, 1831,  
Aged 36.  
And Stanley Gore,  
Died at Quebec May 9, 1833, aged 28.



Sir James Grant, K.C.B., is at Tadousac.

Selina Dolaro is writing a novel called “Bella Demonina.”

Mrs. Cleveland always drinks an apollinaris lemonade before retiring.

The Earl of Buckingham has married an heiress worth \$2,000,000.

Hon. John Haggart was sworn in at Quebec on Monday, the 6th, by the Governor-General.

The Governor-General will remain at the Citadel until, at least, the end of the first week in September.

A pipe smoked by Gen. Jackson while he was President has lately been presented to the New England Historical Society.

Lord Randolph Churchill is an enthusiastic student of Gibbon, and can repeat by heart long passages of the “Decline and Fall.”

Sir Geo. Stephen has resigned the presidency of the C. P. R., and has been succeeded by Mr. Van Horne, but will continue to dwell in Canada.

Captain Sir William Wiseman, Bart., the popular commandant of H.M.S. *Caroline*, entertained a few friends at a dinner party given on board of his floating palace, prior to taking his final leave from Vancouver.

Professor Sedgwick, the eminent political economist, is a somewhat spare man, of middle height, with large eyes and long, dark beard, flecked with gray. He suffers from an impediment in his speech, which prevents him from speaking with effect in public.

## WRIGHT'S ISLAND.

ON THE GATINEAU.

“See Paris and die.” Not so! Find out the beauties of your own land and live. With this object in view, a party of five of us started out, one fair July day, with the thermometer “up among the nineties.” Leaving Ottawa, in a comfortable carriage, by the Suspension Bridge, we passed through French-Canadian Hull, which is fast rising from its ashes, this time with a good system of water-works. Crossing over a stone bridge, which spans Brigham's Creek, we reached the Chelsea road, whose well graded, level and smooth appearance partly excused the extortionate tolls demanded. A bend in the road, and the turrets and spires of the city, with the flying buttresses of the Parliamentary library, are seen. Now the fertile slopes of the residence of the Hon. R. W. Scott come into view, and the old Brigham homestead, a stone house and outbuilding, the fields enclosed with stone walls, a relic of the patience of fifty years ago. On one side of the road is a heap of ruins, all that is left of a house, in which a man tried to stir up some dynamite with a lighted pipe. Fields of waving grain, ripening for the harvest on every hand, and away in the distance the ridge of the Laurentian range, with sides covered with dark, green foliage, so refreshing to the eye; and here and there an old-time log house, with the mortar between the logs, freshly whitewashed, shining in the sun; then a glimpse, through the trees, of the waters of the Gatineau. Crossing the dry bed of a mountain stream, and passing many fallen trees—the remains of the late storm—the country becomes more undulating, until Ironsides, a small village, is reached. This place, peopled mostly with those engaged in the iron mines in the neighbourhood, display a few tasteful houses and a temperance hotel. Once more the green and gold of the waving fields, and then piles of lumber blot out the landscape, as Gilmore's rafting ground is reached, where the “horny-handed sons of toil,” with indescribable straw hats, were busy piling lumber. A sudden turn to the right, down a steep road, bordered with elm, maple and the red-crowned sumach trees, and the refreshing sound of rushing water is heard. In a short time a wooden bridge is reached, spanning the boiling waters of the Gatineau, which we crossed. On the other side, on the top of a terraced hill, is a