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The Catholic Register

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CHRONICLES OF AN UNGUARDIAN TIMER

Extracts from the Memoirs of
Gen. E. A. Theller, of the Canadian
Republican Army of
1837-8, Continued—The Horrors
of that Time Described,
and What Men Suffered in
Toronto Jail.

Chicago, May 15, 1904

Editor Catholic Register:

Following are further extracts from
General Theller's memoirs:

"We were confined in what was called the long hall, in the second story of the building. At four o'clock the prisoners were locked up in the cells, without fire or light; and at seven in the morning the cell doors were opened and they had permission to remain in the hall until the hour of four again. The prison was at that time crowded; there were upwards of three hundred of the inhabitants incarcerated. Amongst this number were probably more than one hundred of the most reputable and useful men of the country. In the hall, the next morning, were seventy three, all of them wealthy farmers, and many of whom had been confined for two months, obliged to live on the rations which were served out to them—a pound of bread and a pint of a species of soup, made out of the head of a bullock—and that served up so filthily that those of delicate stomachs could not even bear the smell of it. Most of them had passed the ordeal of being kept below in the dungeons, for two or three weeks, to break them in; and duly appreciated the favor of being sent above to make room for new arrivals.

"The tale told by these men was one of horror and deep-dyed villainy. Many of them were imprisoned on vague suspicion; others for having, years before, voted for Reformers at an election; some because Tory magistrates were indebted to them, and requiring their pay, received it in the shape of a commitment to prison; others who had been seen at Montgomery's in arms, but who had laid them down on the reception of the proclamation of the Governor, promising an amnesty to all who would retire peacefully to their homes and report themselves to a magistrate, surrendering their arms, and renewing their oath of allegiance. Of the many who did this, although Sir Francis Bond Head had held forth that the principles of monarchy were honor, scarcely one escaped when within the reach of his power; being arrested at his home, tied to his neighbor with ropes, and driven into Toronto as galley-slaves. His sacred word of England, as a man pledged, that if they would refrain from cutting his lying, hypocritical throat, when they had it in their power, and return to their allegiance, all should be forgotten. How well that sacred pledge of honor or was kept, the moans and shrieks of distracted wives and mothers—of householders and heart-broken orphaned children—No language of ours, and none but that of a woman who has seen husband and father fettered, and dragged from their beds in the night, her house burned over her head, and she, with her offspring, a moment before in affluence, now a wandering beggar, can tell. There are none others who are gifted with the power of even dreaming of language sufficiently expressive.

"Those unacquainted with the policy of the British Government, and the nature of the vain, shifting, little fool who then administered to her wants and caprices in Upper Canada, need not be surprised that this noble excuse he offered for this cruel son to himself and mankind (he could not be treated), was that circumstances of his government had occurred by which he thought the province would be in danger if he allowed them to go at large. Ergo, the necessity of fire, pillage, chains, imprisonment and the gallows. As said Queen Elizabeth on her death-bed to the Countess of Nottingham, 'God may forgive you, but

I never will.' If, indeed, I had not seen enough previously of the wrongs of suffering Canada, before I was three days in that prison I saw enough to stagger all human belief. A grand school would it have been for the few copper-counting, miserly and heartless wretches we tolerate in this country who denounced and pronounced the patriot, and pronounced the complaints of the wrongs and injuries of the suffering Canadians unfounded, and them unworthy of either belief or protection in their revolutionary struggle. Even such callous beings confined along with such men for a few days, would have seen and have heard enough to make them ashamed to indulge in such opinions and such vile prejudices.

"The Tory party have never attempted to deny the truths related by these men; but justify them, on the ground of their being the smaller number; using the argument that it was necessary for them to exert themselves in taking up all the popular men and disarming the people, lest they should rise up, and insisting upon their rights and liberties, treat them in like manner. Can any man possessed of a spark of American feeling say that this was sufficient to justify the declaration of martial law, the suspension of the habeas corpus, arbitrary imprisonment, the burning of churches, the pillaging of villages, the firing of houses, and the murder and roasting alive of their fellow-citizens, turning their wives and children homeless and homeless wanderers upon the cold charities of the world; casting their noblemen by nature—their intellectual and talented lords of the soil—into prison, or driving them into exile? And all this that a few should rule? No; no. There is no American that can or will say, with a knowledge of these truths, that the people of Canada were not, by all and every principle of right, human and divine, called upon to rise up and free themselves from the despotism which enslaved them. Even now, at home, in the midst of my family, and in my much-loved adopted country, surrounded by free men, who know what their liberty is worth, I shudder when I recall those scenes of remembrance, and reflect upon some of the transactions which I have witnessed; and which are too indelibly engraved on my mind ever to be erased.

"It is a painful task for me to draw the curtain and expose to my readers 'man's inhumanity to man'; but, nevertheless, I considered it my duty I owe the tyrannical portion of my fellow-beings to represent the case of at least one man in prison. William le Comfort, a highly respectable and wealthy individual, and who was the first of the prisoners with whom I became acquainted, was arrested and committed for the crime of loaning his team to Mackenzie and another person, under the following circumstances. On the morning after the defeat at Montgomery's, these individuals called at his home, situated some twenty-five or thirty miles from the battle-ground, on their way to the Niagara frontier; and, being well acquainted with Mackenzie, he invited him to refresh his anxiety; and, on learning his anxiety to proceed on a journey, and oblige his horse fatigued, tendered his own, and all this without any knowledge of an escape, a battle, or a defeat. For this simple offence, or, if the reader please, high-handed outrage, he was arrested and dragged to prison; and, not content with this, the magistrates so brutally treated his wife, in the hope of obtaining information she did not possess, to implicate her husband, by telling her among other things, he would be hanged the next day, that premature labor was brought on, and she and her babe, before that day's sun was set, were in their graves. I cannot find words to describe, and must leave it to the imagination of my readers, who the indignities and the husband and father, in his dungeon, and in irons, on receiving the agonizing intelligence. Unhappy man! What could he do but make an effort to brace his nerves and stay the bursting of his heart-strings, for the sake of his other four motherless children, exposed to the like brutal malice of the murderers of his wife?

"The brutality exercised in this case roused the indignation of even some of the Orange Tory party, and when he begged the authorities to allow him to go out on bail, only to the funeral, and to provide some place for his children, he was refused. The most unexceptionable condition that he might be accompanied by a guard and returned immediately to his cell. They laughed in very derision at the request; forbade any communication with him or the other persons, so that no friend could whisper a word of consolation to ease his breaking heart. In my pity for him I momentarily forgot my own situation, the indignities and insults offered my person, and commiserated with this, my wretched fellow-being, whom I verily believe, would have fallen a victim to his grief had we not consoled and encouraged him to live for his children and came to Toronto and besought admittance to their father. Their tears and entreaties softened the heart of their jailer, and he took them to the chancellor, Jamieson, whose office it was to grant passes, and begged permission to let their father see them; but it was against the order of the Governor, and could not be permitted. So it was with other prisoners during the whole winter, murderer, and thief—all that was vile, hideous, and execrable in society, could see their associates and relatives, and commune with them, but those who were incarcerated for their love of country were shut out from all communion with friend, neighbor, or relative. The husband was forbidden to see his wife, even through the grated bars of his cell; and the child was deprived of all intercourse with his sick and dying parent. They could see none to bless them—none whom they could bless.

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"The orders were so strict that even the widows, grates as they were, were not considered enough; and to prevent any one from seeing, and to exclude the air and light from getting into this modern 'hole of Calcutta,' these were boarded up. Fathers were arrested by the guards, and thrown into the dungeon, for on-ly looking up at the windows of the rooms where their sons were confined; and wives and daughters were rudely driven off by the bayonets of the guards for stopping in the streets at a distance of probably twenty rods to catch a glimpse of their husband or father. The Tories were at this time much elated with their success. They had burnt the Caroline, Navy Island had been evacuated, and they thought themselves invincible. They treated the prisoners with proportionate severity. News, however, came, that the patriots were preparing for an incursion on the Michigan frontier, when they began to relax a little from their harshness, and treat us with some little lenity."

Comments by the writer.—At the time of the rebellion the jail where General Theller and his companions were confined was on Church street, opposite St. James' Cathedral, and the sheriff was Mr. Jarvis, a humane gentleman, but, of course, was required to obey orders. Sir Francis Bond Head, the Governor, had a reputation of a patrician tyrant, who was a coward as well, and was afraid of his shadow. I do not know what became of Mr. Comfort, whose harrowing case is described by General Theller, but I knew one of the family in California, where he kept a comfortable hotel at a place called San Juan del Sud. He was familiarly known as 'Johnny' and the burning of him is now dead. The burning of the Caroline with her passengers and sending her over Niagara Falls, was a very dastardly deed for which Sir Allan Napier McNab was held responsible. It almost led to very serious complications between the United States and British governments at the time, as the Caroline was an American boat, tied up in an American harbor. But it was supposed she was driving a trade in bringing American recruits to Mr. Mackenzie at Navy Island. The other horrors described took place in Lower Canada.

WILLIAM HALLEY.

Death of Earl Cherry.

We deeply regret to announce the sudden death of Aloysius, son of Earl Cherry, 21 Pembroke street. Deceased was a pupil of St. Michael's School, where by his winning manner and genial disposition he made himself a general favorite with both his teachers and pupils. The funeral took place from St. Michael's Cathedral, Friday last. The boys of Form III., class-mates of the deceased, sang several touching hymns during the funeral service, which was celebrated by Rev. Father Murray. After mass the boys formed ranks and preceded the hearse some distance on its way to the last resting place of the dear departed. To the sorrowing parents and many friends of Earl Aloysius the Register tenders its deepest sympathy.

Church of Our Lady of Lourdes

Editor Register
Will you kindly tell me in your welcome weekly paper when the corner stone was laid of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes and oblige.
CONSTANT READER.

The corner stone was laid in 1884, but we have been unable to fix the exact day. The foundation was begun late in the year and the Church opened was about November 1, 1886. Ed. C.R.

Catholic Emigration

Mr. Lawrence Luston, agent and visitor for Canada for the Catholic Children's Emigration Society, whose headquarters are at Liverpool, England, was in the city Tuesday.

"GO TO SCHOOL"

Said the crow to little Tommy, His advice is good to-day to the young man who aspires.
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SUMMER PROGRAMME.

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Ottawa University

President Emery Explains Its Position
(Ottawa Citizen.)

Cornwall, May 11.—A movement which is likely to be far-reaching was inaugurated at a largely attended meeting of the Roman Catholics of Cornwall to discuss the need of a university or some such educational institution to meet the wants of the English-speaking Roman Catholics of Canada. John A. Chisholm presided and Alex. F. Macdonald acted as secretary. After addresses by several prominent citizens a resolution was passed to the effect that it was desirable to formulate a plan by means of which the English-speaking Catholics of Canada could be aroused to an active interest in securing an English Catholic college. It is understood that similar action will shortly be taken in other Catholic centers in Ontario and that committees will be appointed to work towards this end in conjunction with a committee which was appointed at the meeting here.

"Talk is cheap," said Rev. Dr. Emery, O.M.I., president of the University of Ottawa, when shown the above despatch, "but talk won't establish or maintain a university, more especially a denominational university that gets no assistance from the government, and has to depend on its own resources. Moreover money alone is not capable of maintaining a university. It takes self-sacrifice, and great self-sacrifice at that. Get it back to the money end of the proposition it may be worth remembering that Andrew Carnegie, who thought \$50,000 enough to establish a library, did not think \$10,000,000 too much to set aside for the establishment of a university at Washington. I would say to those that are talking about an exclusively English-speaking university: 'You must get it out you must expect to be called on for great expenditure and great self-sacrifice.'"

FRENCH AND ENGLISH.

Dr. Emery resented the allegation that the University of Ottawa favors the French-speaking element, and slights the English-speaking one. "Sir James Grant," he said, "recently made the statement, 'If the glory of the University of Ottawa is to be able to bring the two elements together.' The university at Toronto can afford to be exclusively English and the university at Quebec exclusively French, but the University of Ottawa, situated as it is at the federal capital, must receive both races; and any preference that exists is in favor of the English. This has been the case ever since the foundation of the university. It was established for the special purpose of giving the English-speaking Catholic youth the higher education that they could not otherwise obtain, except at an outside institution. The French-speaking youth was provided for, a fact which was recognized at the time our present university was founded.

COMMERCIAL COURSE.

"The commercial course is entirely English, in fact we can not make it too much so to please ourselves," said the president. "The scientific course is also in English, with French a mere detail, the new medical course will be entirely in English, and the course in theology, as must needs be, is in Latin."

"But how about the arts course?" Dr. Emery was asked. "There are full, distinct and separate arts courses in both English and French," was the reply, "and our degree stands as high as any granted in the country. In fact the only department in which we want the French to be on an equal footing with the English is in the arts course. As a matter of fact if there was a demand for an arts course in the Japanese or the Russian tongue, and we found it to be a necessity, we would establish one. It would be manifestly unfair, if they did not desire to do so, to ask the French, Russians or Japanese to take their arts course in English or any other tongue not their own. The French course in arts established a few years ago, has nothing to do

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with the English course in arts, which is complete in itself."
"How about the statement that French-speaking professors are given the preference over English-speaking ones on the faculty?" Dr. Emery was asked.

NOT A NATIONAL QUESTION.

"It is not a case of nationality at all, it is a case of the office," was his reply. "English-speaking priests cannot take kindly to teaching the poorer parish work. The offices on the faculty have to be filled, and if we cannot get English-speaking priests to fill them, we must take French-speaking ones, for the offices have to be filled. As a matter of fact there is a good proportion of English-speaking priests on the faculty, and they have the preference where procurable. Rev. Fathers McGurty and Fulham, whose deaths following the fire we deplore, were taken on for this reason, and we've been unable to find others of their tongue to fill their places."

Dr. Emery intimated that English-speaking lay professors would be required to meet the difficulty.

OTHER INSTITUTIONS.

"The property alone required to carry out our work here represents half a million dollars. It required fifty years' work to bring the university up to a standard where it has 500 students enrolled. Regiopolis College, at Kingston, is an English-speaking institution; its charter is as old as that of our university, but still it has only 50 students in attendance. Sandwich College and St. Michael's College, Toronto, also English-speaking, have small enrollments in comparison with ours. We have had much greater success in the growth of our student body than they, but it has needed great and persistent self-sacrifice to bring this about. Our faculty and student body alone represent an investment of a million dollars. We have at least a dozen professors who are working without other return than the advancement of Catholic education, who could command salaries of \$2,000 to \$3,000 in other institutions. Some of them are men with fifteen of twenty years' experience, but all are fully capable in their lines. Some of those that might be mentioned are Rev. Drs. Boyle, Herwig, Fallon, Kerwin, Sherry, Antoine, Lacoste and Nilles. These and others are devoting their lives to the cause of education asking no worldly consideration in return."

Concluding, Dr. Emery said: "The University of Ottawa was established for the Catholic youth, English-speaking Catholic as well as other, that aim will never be lost sight of, but we cannot accomplish everything in a day. Criticism is cheap."

THE "TORONTO NEWS" AND SEPARATE SCHOOLS

Editor of The Catholic Register:

Your correspondent has already criticized the manner in which the Toronto News has distorted the action of the Separate School supporters of St. Catharines in its issue of May 6th. They have asked that the school taxes on money they contribute to bonded industries be given to their schools, and The News represents this as "demanding a proportion of the taxes paid by Protestants." The contemptible juggling of this contention has been dealt with in a previous letter. The article, however, abounds in gems of the same order. It speaks of "generosity that has been displayed by this province towards the Church, of the privilege of having Separate Schools, of the United States where every Catholic taxpayer must contribute to the support of the Public Schools, the assumption that Public and Separate Schools are on a level before the law."

It would be hard to find such an amount of trickery, venom, ignorance of Canadian history and of the everyday workings of our educational system, concentrated so artistically as in this article. Were the editor of The News present at a meeting of the Canadian Catholic Union at which the present Premier of Ontario delivered a characteristic brilliant address on the Canadian Constitution, he would have learned that the Separate School System in our Dominion owes its paternity to Protestants. Did the same sapient editor know anything of Quebec he would be aware that the Protestant Separate Schools of that province are treated far more

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generously than are the Catholic Separate Schools in Ontario. Catholics deny that Separate Schools either in Ontario or Quebec are a privilege. In both cases they are a right. And the fact that Catholics in the United States are compelled to pay taxes towards Public Schools no more proves that this is right than that lynching which flourishes in the same region is just. The editor forgot to mention that if Catholics are compelled to support Public Schools in the United States they have a voice in the spending of the Public School taxes and the choice of public school teachers.

The editor of The News tells us that "no matter what religion a man professes he can send his children to the Public Schools without the least danger of having them taught doctrines to which he objects." Observe the modesty of the editor of The News. "No matter what religion a man professes" that omniscient gentleman can define his duties with unerring precision! We may now expect men of all religions to visit The News' sanctum as a shrine, take off their shoes (John Chinaman will have a distinct advantage, as he can shuffle out of his quite easily), and advance into the presence of the mighty oracle with all the awe of a Mussulman entering the Mosque of Omar. But should any Catholic take that pilgrimage he will find it pretty difficult to reconcile his own experience with the words of The News' oracle, "that he can send his children to the Public Schools without the least danger of having them taught doctrines to which he objects." The Catholic father knows from experience (for a large proportion of Catholic children in this province must attend Public Schools) that children learn a great deal from their companions, and in that way, even were the teacher scrupulously impartial, his children are taught doctrines to which he objects. Moreover, the exclusion of all religious teaching from the work of education, which is practical agnosticism is a doctrine to which he very strongly objects. For him it is not enough that no doctrine to which he objects is positively taught; his cardinal principle is that doctrines he regards as all important must be taught. It may be said that this is the work of the home. Why should not reading, arithmetic, etc., be similarly the work of the home? Because parents in most cases have neither the time nor training required for secular education! How, then, have they the requisite qualifications for teaching the most profound and important of all subjects—religion? But the Church can supply their deficiency in this respect." Yes, if you will send children to church for several hours five days a week. You practically take up a child's whole time in secular education, and then you leave the crumbs of time which fall from the table for religion! This is the highly complimentary attitude of the religion adopted by those who think that Catholic parents ought to send their children to schools in which nothing contrary to their religion is taught! In the first place we have not such schools. In the second place, if we had we Catholics regard religion as the vital principle of education. The atmosphere associations, teaching of the school room should be permeated by religious influence. And we are not alone in this view. The flourishing denominational schools and colleges of this city show that parents of other creeds share our sentiments.

The News, as is evident from its editorial columns, is determined to resuscitate P.P.A.-ism. It is now shouting about the hierarchy and Roman aggression in a manner which should do credit to Saturday Night in its nightmare stage. There is not the remotest evidence that the hierarchy had anything to do with either the Sturgeon Falls or St. Catharines proceedings. In both cases Catholic laymen moved for what they regarded as their rights. And it is satisfactory to note that the attitude of our leading papers such as the Toronto Globe and the Toronto Star, the Toronto World, the Hamilton Times, has been so impartial, so opposed to the methods of The News that the new P.P.A.-ism of that journal will not be more successful than that of its former management.

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