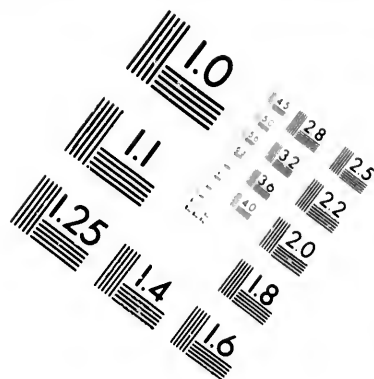
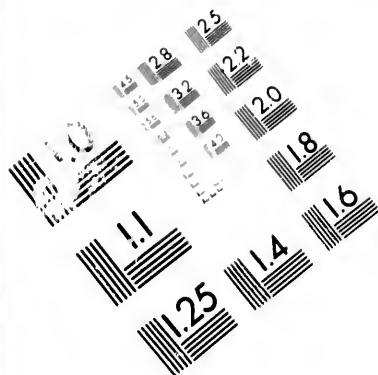
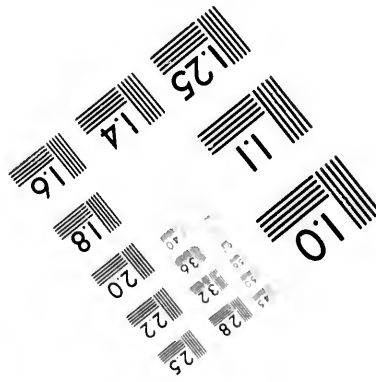
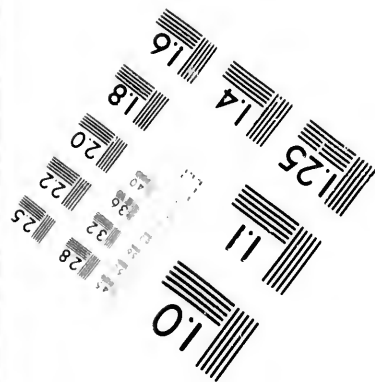
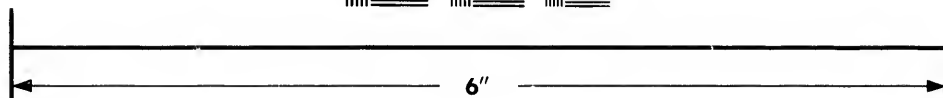
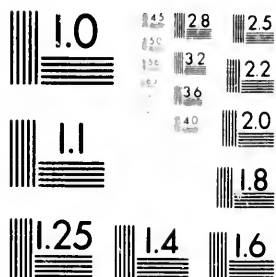




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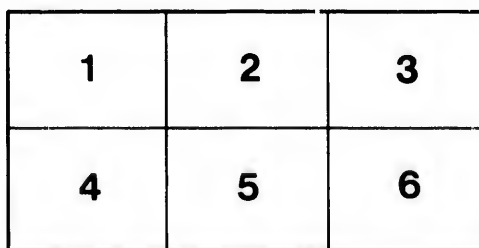
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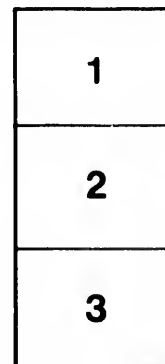
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THE  
UN-PACIFIC SCANDAL

AT THE  
CUSTOM-HOUSE OF MONTREAL

BY  
HENRY LACROIX

AUTHOR OF THE

"CANADIAN GUIDE AND BOOK OF REFERENCE" (1873). *With descriptions and statistics of all places along the lines of railway in the Province of Ontario; including a lively description of the old city of QUEBEC. Price reduced to 25 cents, etc., etc.*

FIRST EDITION

MONTREAL  
OCTOBER 1873

*Orders addressed to HENRY LACROIX, Montreal*

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# THE UN-PACIFIC SCANDAL

AT THE  
CUSTOM HOUSE OF MONTREAL.

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Those readers who may imagine that this work was got up in a vindictive spirit or as a retaliation for personal wrongs, need only be told that the author considers he has to fight other battles than his own : that the great majority of the employes at the Custom House of Montreal, who have had to suffer in many ways from its present administration, without any near prospect of relief, require also that the Public, as a supreme authority, should be called to consider the following matters of public import, and thereby compel the Government to institute an enquiry. This introductory paragraph and the following letter, will give readers some idea of the nature of this work, and induce them to give to the whole a careful and unbiased consideration.

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MONTREAL, 20th Sept., 1873.

SIR,—You will please understand that I can no longer temporize, and that you must either openly state your intentions with regard to me, or carry into effect your reiterated promises, given under your *word of honor*, that you would have me reinstated in my former position in the Custom House at Montreal if I put a stop to the law suit which I had instituted against you, which promises you afterwards for political emergencies altered thus : that in nowise would you put any obstacle in the way of my reinstatement, etc, etc. Was your proposition made through the Hon. J. L. Beaudry, Messrs. C. O. Perrault and Joseph Turgeon, your delegates, sincere ? . . . Was not the frank and loyal manner in which I acted on that occasion such as to prove to you that I did not wish to make an improper use of the circumstances which had put you in my power, notwithstanding the remembrance of the treatment to which I had to submit when you were my superior. That treatment might naturally have led me to refuse your proposition, or induced me to exact a larger amount than the two thousand dollars which you paid. By my refusing to comply with your wishes you would, in all likelihood, have had to expend eight thousand dollars, without counting law expenses. Your four votes so imprudently given at the last general elections rendered you liable to that penalty.

The motive which had urged me to institute that action did not rest upon any

consideration of gain, as I already told you, but was in consequence of your unjust and arbitrary conduct towards me, which you probably thought you might exercise with impunity or without ulterior consequences. You showed yourself implacable; while my conduct was the reverse. When you appeared to have become aware of the wrongs you had done me, and to have desired to atone for them, although at a late hour, it seemed to me right to attach to your words the sense which they naturally bore. This I did, although I felt keenly an impression that your apparent sincerity was only a blind, concealing the true object you had in view. A close examination confirmed this impression, but, as formerly, I felt myself capable not only of resisting your hidden attacks, however traitorous they might be, but to force you again to beg for my compassion, or to make a public spectacle of your vileness should you not take that proper step.

I do not like the office of reforming people by punishing them, but if after this notice it suits you to submit to punishment rather than fulfil your obligations, please let me know at once.

I am, Sir, Yours, etc.,

HENRY LACROIX.

A. M. DELISLE, Esq.,  
Collector of Customs, Montreal.

It will be seen from the foregoing letter that the affairs at the Custom House of Montreal are managed in a queer manner. The Collector, Mr. A. M. Delisle, through his ill-treatment of the author, a commissioned officer of twenty years' standing in the service, against whom he brought no complaint, forces him to offer his (conditional) resignation. The condition referred to was—eight hundred dollars as a gratuity. The condition was laid aside, but the resignation accepted, as if not conditional. Being sued by the author some time after for having voted at the last general elections, the said Collector, after a while, desires to make a compromise, and through the three delegates mentioned in the letter above, endeavors to bring the matter to a satisfactory point for himself. During this trial, which was instituted in earnest, and also in order to show collusion in the two former cases which Mr. Delisle had previously *pro forma*, got up against himself through the instrumentality of Messrs. J. C. Baker and Z. Séry, the latter testified under oath to the following effect:—

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, }  
District of Montreal. }

SUPERIOR COURT  
FOR LOWER CANADA.

No. 2403.

HENRY LACROIX, *Plaintiff*,

*vs.*

A. M. DELISLE, *and al. Defendant*.

1st. *Question*.—Is not your name Zéphirin Séry, and are you not one of the defendants in this case?

*Answer*.—Yes.

2d. *Question*.—Is not the case pending before this Court under the No. 1195, in which you appear as plaintiff against the said Alexandre Maurice Delisle collusively instituted between you and the said Delisle to prevent the said Delisle from the payment of the sum which you claim in the said case, No. 1195,

*Answer.*—When I instituted the aforesaid action against the said A. M. Delisle, it was at the request of my brother-in-law, Louis Roch, carpenter, of the City of Montreal, now residing at No. 359 Visitation street, who came in a carriage to see me while I was at work, and told me: You can earn ten dollars and me also ten dollars by going with me; I went to the Court House with him, that is to say, to the Police Court. Mr. Schiller, the Clerk of the Crown, asked me if I could speak English, and I replied yes. Then another person, unknown to me, read to me a paper in English. I cannot say what was on the paper which was read to me, not having understood. I understand English a little, in conversation, in the way of my trade, and that is all. I said under oath that I could speak English a little, but I did not say that I understood that which was read to me. On the day following, an Englishman, unknown to me, gave me twenty dollars in a house which I could not designate. The wife of Louis Roch was with me, and I gave her ten dollars. I am not acquainted with any lawyer by the name of J. C. Lacoste (his own lawyer—Author). I cannot tell for what sum of money an action was taken in my name against A. M. Delisle; I do not know why that action was instituted against him.

*Question.*—Please give your attention to the reading of an affidavit produced in the case No. 1195 made by yourself, and please say who read you that affidavit which was sworn to by you?

*Answer.*—I have now heard the said affidavit read to me, and it is the first time I have heard it read. If anything of it was read to me at the time it must have been in English. I do not know any lawyer by the name of Bourgouin (a partner of his first lawyer already named—Author).

*Question.*—Was it ever your intention to claim of Alexandre Maurice Delisle, Esq., Collector of Customs of the City of Montreal, the sum of eight thousand dollars as a penalty for having voted in the elections of eighteen hundred and seventy-one?

*Answer.*—I have never had that intention, and if any action has been instituted in my name against Mr. Delisle for that object, I know nothing of it. At the time when I received the twenty dollars in question I had never heard it said that Mr. Delisle had voted in the elections of eighteen hundred and seventy-one in the County of Jacques Cartier, nor at Hochelaga, nor at Montreal East, nor at Montreal Centre. I claim no sum of money from the said Alexandre M. Delisle in consideration of any cause whatever. I do not know the man. I can neither read nor write. My brother-in-law, Louis Roch, has been agent, I believe, to draw the rents of a house or two owned by Mr. Delisle, and which he remitted to Mr. Schiller. The house in which Louis Roch now lives in has been sold by Mr. Schiller or Mr. Delisle.

And the deponent adds nothing else, and the present answers having been read to him he declares them truthful, persisting in them, and declaring himself unable to sign his name.

Sworn, taken and acknowledged before us, in Montreal in the month and year aforesaid.

(Signed),

HUBERT, PAPINEAU & HONEY,  
Prothonotary, Superior Court.

The above strange testimony, which reveals on the part of Mr. Delisle a very unscrupulous mind, is enough of itself to show what confidence can be placed in this public functionary, occupying such a responsible position. That testimony had, no doubt, a great deal to do in bringing about Mr. Delisle's proposition of compromise. It was divulged in the Court House, where Mr. Delisle had learned during his long career to apply the laws over petty criminals, a place in which he was not fit even to occupy a seat, unless that of shame, having been stigmatized in it as a lawbreaker heretofore, which resulted after an *enquête* in his dismissal.

The late Sir George Cartier, however, in his political or another kind of compassion, established him in a better berth—in the one which he now occupies.

The Board of Trade and public of Montreal have been made to accept as their Collector of Customs a criminal who has not even been whitewashed. The first and most important port of Canada could very well have dispensed with the obtrusive and hurtful services of that branded functionary who, apart from many considerations, can claim here no political or other sound influence. It was, however, the will of the reigning power that the great and proud city should thus be humiliated; but the outraged sentiment very well resented the infliction at the last general elections by overwhelming with disgrace and discomfiture the old titled candidate who had been prominent in violating in this and other respects the popular will and even common decency.

The corruption of the United States Government in which the Credit Mobilier and the Tammany Hall Ring and its subordinate rings found nourishment—and which our people and papers so much condemned at the time, as if such a state of affairs never could take root and far less flourish here—has at last become in our Council Chambers and everywhere else a very unpleasant subject to bring on the *tapis* of discussion or conversation. The “clean hands,” so *Pacifically* stretched out to take American ways and *means*—which heavenward lifted sarcastically and defiantly mock the ethereal witnesses as *absent, blind, deaf* and *dumb*, unable to *appear, see, hear* and *speak*—these “clean hands” must very soon find out that “honesty is, after all, the best policy,” and that such pathetic mockery of *sworn* innocence, so harmoniously expressed, cannot find credence even on the part of the “Rings,” which fit so well on those hands—nor among those in the above regions who have necessarily to vindicate the existence of their acute senses, appealed to by paralyzing those daring hands and their “Rings.”

When Mr. Delisle, at his own request, had an interview with the writer on the subject of the said compromise, the latter considered he had the right to tell him *frankly* and *loyally* what his opinions were, and he said:—

\* \* \* \*

“In removing me from my station as Landing Waiter, and forcing me to perform a work derogatory to my position, considered in that light by every one in the Custom House and the Department as well, which was so injurious to my shattered health, you behaved towards me unjustly and as an enemy, although I had done nothing to deserve that punishment. If you had had any cause of complaint against me, why did you not manfully bring forward those charges, and thereby give me a chance to exonerate myself, instead of behaving as you did. Mr. Tilley, then Minister of Customs, before whom I went to plead my case, told me before the Commissioner of Customs, that he could not approve of what you had done; that you had *asked* him for *carte-blanche* to make changes in the Custom House, and, therefore, that he could not at once and directly undo what you had done; that it would be tantamount to official censure. He promised me, however, if I consented to act as locker, as you desired, that he would within two weeks make things satisfactory to me. How and by what means was that promise of the Minister made of no avail, and broken?... Why did you not employ me in the office in place of the many supernumeraries, who could much more properly have been detailed to perform the office of locker, rather than a commissioned officer? What had I done to you? Why did you force me in every way to give in my resignation? You tell me now that my resignation was only *conditional*,

and that the door is *thereby left open to me*. I have all along been aware of that fact, and was not relying on you to get back again, some day or other, and thereby get justice. I now am willing to comply with your wishes, because my heart is not bad and that I do not wish to drive you to the extreme of my might. When I brought you my letter of resignation to transmit to the Department at Ottawa, and that you told me that I was spirited, intelligent and energetic, and could do much better outside of the service, and that you wished me well, and that as to the gratuity which I was claiming in my letter of resignation, as a positive condition, and which you considered me entitled to, which I should and must get, why then, after so many expressions of kindness and good-will, and such hearty squeezes of the hand, five minutes after I had left your office, write to the Department in such a way as to prevent me from getting that gratuity?... I have seen that letter of yours in Ottawa, and have a copy of it."

The writer was impelled after he left the Custom House to resent the grievous injury which Mr. Delisle had thus done him in depriving him of his daily bread and even the prospect of superannuation, to which he should have been entitled, by instituting the action referred to. A transfer of the benefits to arise from said action was made in favor of the *Institut Canadien* of Montreal, to the President of which the two thousand dollars were paid by Mr. Delisle. While the action was going on in the Superior Court, Mr. Delisle first requested the Hon. J. L. Beaudry to propose to the author a compromise with the positive promise of reinstatement. The author before that had never been near Mr. Delisle, nor employed any one to go near him, for the purpose of effecting any compromise,—he had kept aloof from him studiously; but after Mr. Delisle had gained his point, instead of attaching any importance to his given *word of honor*, or keeping passive even,—when he saw that Mr. Tupper, the Minister of Customs, had verbally assured the author, on the 14th of August last, "that he was reinstated, etc.," instead of helping on or letting the matter take its regular and proper course, he, serpent like, moved under the cover (as usual with him) of a private intimation to put a stop to it—claiming that his long and important services (!) to the Government gave him the right to exact that the Minister should abide by his wishes, and also break his word.

Was it not unfortunate for Mr. Delisle, that one of his sons should have since said: "*I cannot conceive it possible that the Hon. Mr. Tupper should have given or shown to Mr. Lacroix my father's private letter.*"

The said Minister, after reading the author's *conditional* resignation, said he was at a loss to understand (and no wonder) how his predecessor, Mr. Tilley, could have accepted purely and simply such a resignation, without keeping account of the condition it contained; that he would not have done so! But what he could do was—to deny point blank, at first, on the 15th. Sept. last, before a witness of his choice, and finally simply doubt that he could have said to the author on the 14th August, the previous month: "I have the pleasure to inform you that you are reinstated, and that my wishes are that your desires as to the kind of work you are to perform, on account of your affliction of dyspepsia, should be complied with; and I instruct you to state this to the Collector; and if it is necessary for me to write the same to him I will do so when you apprize me of it." Mr. Tupper, during the last interview, before his witness—unreflecting no doubt—made to the author a rather strange avowal: that he had to take into con-

sideration the wishes of Mr. Delisle, who had rendered so many services to the Government !!

Were not the facts here related truthful, why did Mr. Tupper order that the author's petition to be reinstated, endorsed by the Department at Ottawa as follows :—"Mr. Lacroix being an officer against whom there appears to be no cause of complaint, but on the contrary generally approved as efficient, etc., I see no reason why he may not be allowed to withdraw his resignation provided his services are required in Montreal,—Signed, J. Johnston, Asst. Commissioner of Customs"—be sent on to the Collector at Montreal? Mr. Delisle happening as an ordinary occurrence, which has become chronic with him, to be at Rimouski, that document had to be transferred to him there from Montreal by Mr. Crispo, who acts for him here. The latter received some time after the intelligence from the first that he would answer directly to the Department; but he relented, and finally ordered Mr. Crispo to reply—"There is no vacancy!"—The double shuffle was thus made apparent, and the operator's mask fell!

Many other charges beside these and the following might be brought to light against Mr. Delisle by means of an investigation were he to linger in office, instead of resigning, as he often has spoken of doing. The cloud over his head is thick and dark—thicker and darker than that which drove him in disgrace and dismay from the Court House. Will he tarry and run the risk of being again dragged through the ordeal he had then to undergo—for the sake of the annuity of six hundred pounds, which he is so persistently claiming as superannuation for an undue amount of public service—which, were it unjustly accorded to him, would swell but little indeed his personal income. The question, however, in a moral sense, is significant and interesting, and the psychologically inclined may have an opportunity of becoming convinced that an unwieldy physique and wealth are rather a curse than a blessing.

It is considered by many people who run through life in a hurried manner, or carelessly, that those constituted differently from themselves, and who attach a great importance to the blazing materiality of this world, should wear themselves out of that stupid mania. That notion is loose, wild, and philosophically wrong. Deep hued sin left to itself would get to be boundless, and darken the existence of common sense and virtue in such a way as to choke both, were not its great surging forces, which only seek to destroy, arrested at the proper time. Those who represent and enact that gross state require and seek occasionally in their own way for the excruciating process which some have to exercise over them; their unfoldment necessarily depends on such kind of fraternal function and office, which becomes effective in its results, only on the condition that the dealing hand shall be strong and moved by a proper spirit.

The person to whom these remarks may be particularly applied as fitting, offers in another way some remarkable traits, which distinguish him, although a unit, as a curious and distinct duality. The primitive nature of the "fallen angel," which comprise ambition, boldness, cruelty, pride, and the active passions in their fiery state, which he possesses, render him terrible and very dangerous, coupled as these passions are in him with the lesser evils which are reflected from the first, and serve to hide or veil their action; that positive nature, so original,

and balancing itself scientifically and artistically, to use a mild term, loses much, however, of its effect in the eyes of a connoisseur when the linked-to second part is seen to lurk out child-like, and obliterate occasionally the first. The savage crouches down before anything unusual to him, which he cannot understand, and loses temporarily his power. The shark, that voracious and dreadful fish of the sea, which carries terror among others of the finny tribe, and sailors as well, becomes also very timid at times; for instance, when in the act of seizing the swimmer or diver, the latter defiantly dashes white water into its eyes and jaws. By these examples, cited to illustrate more vividly the discord referred to as forming the second part or nature of our subject, it will be admitted by those who have dealt with that subject that his terrible and foaming faculties can be awed down to child-like timidity and abject fearfulness by the display of a little *white water* dashed into his face with a moral indignation and power. Like the shark, in another respect, our subject cannot do without one or several *pilots* to inspire and guide him in his movements. That queer fancy is a law unto both. It rules our subject and makes him habitually the chained and pitiful slave of contemptible beings, who, while profiting by his munificence extended to them, repay it by resorting to all kinds of mean practices imaginable, to darken his existence and increase his torments.

Mr. Delisle, led by his pilot, Villeneuve, has made the Custom House a very stormy and dreadful place, where all the employees almost have become so dismayed or disgusted, that existence in it is to them a moral and material torture. Who would say the contrary in face of the evidence furnished here, and which can be extended? Who would, for instance, imagine it possible that the Department at Ottawa has had very often to blindly obey the dictates of this *shark* and *pilot*, who have been incarnated here in the above named two human forms? However strange it may appear, it is none the less a fact. These two men, assisted more or less at times by a few others, as coadjutors, have so far upset the old normal and right state of things at this Custom House, that nothing short of the whip used in earnest to drive away the lawless set and their allied companions, forming the "Ring," will be able to restore there proper system and order.

After a few years' repose in the Collector's chair, during which Mr. Delisle revived from the stunning effects of his dismissal from the Court House, his natural propensities returning to active state were first exercised over the writer and a few others. As he gained consciousness and warmed up, his operations became more extensive, bolder, more arbitrary still, and impunity aiding, these operations were extended in an overhand and underhand way in various speculations—in which others, outside of the "Ring," found themselves losers or sufferers.

The predecessors of Mr. Delisle in the Custom House had enjoyed an untarnished reputation and left a good corps of officers, who expected to live in peace as heretofore. The first, however, feeling secure in their honor and conscience, managed without *pilots* or the despicable assistance of "rings" to protect their authority against any presumable danger of its being questioned as unjust, arbitrary or immoral.

Mr. Delisle's administration as Collector has been replete from the beginning almost with overt practices of corruption and mismanagement of such kind and

extent that scarcely any one would believe it unless both were made the subject of a public strict and thorough enquiry and be thereby revealed with all its supporting proof. The facts in that connection now brought forward are particularly furnished for the purpose, of showing the necessity for such an enquiry—which the Government, it would seem, from many indirect and some direct evidences, are averse to institute. Must the great number of employees of the Custom House, who are cognizant of those facts, be made to understand that the evident weakness or looseness manifested thus by the Government—in refusing to listen to the complaints which many among them have timidly or otherwise boldly addressed to it—is nothing less than a proof of connivance on their, the Government's, part, and that they abet it? . . . . . Corruption of such varied and great gravity, coming from such high quarters, in such scarcely undisguised shape, and allowed to spread among subordinate officers of all grades, tends not only to disgust them with their superiors acting thus towards them, but invites them to follow the fast flowing current so profitable to those around them who do so. The attractive circumstances of that sort which surround and impel them on, either to have a willing share in the spoil, which they see others enjoy with perfect ease and impunity, as if there was nothing wrong about it; or, viewed from the higher kind of ground, of furnishing their families with certain wants or comforts which these families have not, and which they cannot in many cases with their limited salaries provide them with—all these considerations forcing themselves upon them daily and repeatedly form, it must be admitted, very strong temptations to be effectually resisted. It must, however, be here acknowledged to the honor of the majority of these employees, that they deserve well indeed of the public and country for having so long kept clear of the contamination which reigned supreme around and above them. There is in the individual human mind a faculty which can readily appreciate such devotedness to stern and right principles, and the people, or the *great* man, more so, will feel cause to be proud of them.

The mercantile class have also had to realize in many ways the effects of the corruption and mismanagement so overtly and otherwise displayed in the Custom House. As the "Ring" enjoys supremacy and interferes more or less, as opportunities offer, in damming the regular course of things, so as to bring the waters to their mills, the importers or their clerks have very often had to submit to vexations or extortions—and quietly submit to them—for fear in acting differently of seeing no way to get out of their repetition or extent. If the large number of quashed complaints which have been fyled in the Collector's office against the members of the "Ring" were examined; or if the Collector's *private* secretary was called on oath to testify as to the nature and extent of those complaints, made by many merchants and others against the "Ring," there would be much to swell the proportions of this work. If the prospect of better times for the Custom House were even to dawn the vexed and pilfered merchants and brokers would, no doubt, turn out *en masse* to testify to their past and present complaints. It is hoped they will soon have that opportunity.

There are officers, clerks, tidewaiters and lockers among the Ring who have no doubt, been forcibly enticed, in some way or other, to belong to it, and who would be glad to free themselves of the obloquy which clings to them as leprosy.

That is known to be the case, but discrimination in this instance would be somewhat hard to establish, as the same atmosphere binds them all together. The breaking up the King will show who among them are but partially tainted.

The accompanying copy of a letter (found further on) of Mr. Landing Waiter Barry, addressed to the Department at Ottawa, which contains startling and grave accusations preferred against Mr. Delisle and his Ring—has to receive here some consideration in reference to the details which it omits in a great measure.

Mr. Villeneuve's appetite and digestive powers, on a par with those of his official master and colleague, are, however, of a disorderly or squandering kind, and profit not to him as unto his protector.

Mr. Delisle had Mr. Villeneuve appointed as appraiser on account of his "meritorious services," and has left him many "doors open" to get at *pickings*; but the would-be "*Irishman*" (!) would perhaps have preferred to see him use a little more *dacancy* in these and other operations; it is a hard thing to bend a full-grown tree. As it has become *de bon gout* (of good taste), during these very Pacific times, to make a liberal use of the purses of others or make *loans* (!) *ad libitum* in exchange for LONG promises to pay (!) Mr. Villeneuve being a big and great man—as he controls the Collector and "has the use of public money for years without interest," as stated in Mr. Barry's letter—thought, it must be supposed, that he had just as much right as the Ministers to adopt that wise and lucrative policy.... But will he be able to get up and command a Royal Commission?..... In *giving* up the Aggregate Book to Mr. A. Laurin, his successor (who might perhaps be found to have a more lively memory than Sir Hugh Allan and others), made *loans* to Mr. Villeneuve to the amount of three or five hundred dollars. It is a difficult thing in these troublesome times to get to exact figures. This was a very *legitimate* transaction!

The second very *thankful* victim of Mr. Villeneuve is Mr. Tide Waiter J. Brosseau, now stationed at St. Armand, from whom Mr. Villeneuve obtained a *loan* of about three hundred dollars. But there are interesting particulars in this case which deserve to be mentioned. Mr. Brosseau was living in Montreal when he made this loan to Mr. Villeneuve; he expected that the latter would get him promoted as promised for the *temporary* use of said loan. He pressed the matter, perhaps, a little too much to suit the delicate feelings of the borrower, and having, unluckily for himself, laid in seven cords of good hard wood for winter's use, which cord wood it exactly suited Villeneuve & Co. to have for *their* particular use, the said fuel was turned into another loan—apart from a fine load of hay which afterwards found its way to Mr. Villeneuve's stables to feed one of Mr. Delisle's horses, which happened somehow to be in said stables, &c., &c. Mr. Brosseau was considerably and quietly removed to St. Armand, to reflect philosophically at his leisure on what had happened. He may have found out by this time, not his money, nor any *value* for it, but that Mr. Villeneuve is a very powerful and influential personage; he may be willing to add something to the above. During this operation, Mr. Delisle had been put into a magnetic sleep by Mr. Villeneuve, during which he conversed with the angels and could see only *their* doings.

The third case concerns Mr. D. Goron, ex-clerk in the Long Room (a very deserving young man, and efficient accountant), who, in some way or another, got in also to be helped out by Mr. Villeneuve of a loan of about one hundred and

twenty-three dollars. Mr. Goron had innocently given to the word *loan* its strict and real meaning, and being hard pressed, after a long delay, for the return of said loan to meet the wants of himself, his mother and sisters, whom he had to sustain, he begged for it, cried for it; but the *legitimate* consequence of those stirring appeals and unfortunate demand was Mr. Goron's dismissal from his situation.

It would be useless to go on here with farther items on this particular part of the subject, as the above will no doubt suffice to illustrate and demonstrate it, for all necessary purposes. We will leave out of these immediate paragraphs the other exploits of Mr. Villeneuve, also those of the minor members of the Ring, to begin a cursory review of the grander tactics and doings of Mr. Delisle as Collector of the Customs of Montreal.

Mr. Delisle being a warm and stern advocate of economy in public matters, could not very well have been expected to follow the footsteps of his predecessors. In consequence of that strong proclivity he began his first reform by exacting an increase to his salary of *six hundred dollars* and getting a *private* secretary, whose salary is now nine hundred and fifty dollars, and a *private* messenger receiving five hundred dollars. This was a bold and radical change, which the Government, no doubt, admired, as a sample of able strategy—and which the whole class of tax-payers, even the malcontents, should also consider in the same light.

By prevailing upon Government to purchase from the Royal Insurance Company the new premises, which offer inadequate proportions and conveniences for a Custom House and Examining Warehouse at the same time, and in the basement of which the waters of the St. Lawrence have an easy access every fall and spring, unfitting that part to be constantly used for storing goods brought in for examination or otherwise, Mr. Delisle considered the investment from a financial point of view rather than by those vulgar principles which reformists are so apt to bring forward on every possible occasion. Mr. Delisle being a large and successful real estate owner, possessed the necessary qualifications to give to Government the very best opinion in this transaction, and as to the carrying out of a close bargain, in which so many men are apt, unless very closely watched, and even then, to realize handsome or extraordinary bonuses or *loans*, he, Mr. Delisle, acquitted himself in this affair to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, notwithstanding what Dame Rumor may have then said to the contrary. Vindication never comes too late, and clean hands need not be afraid to show themselves; these must be the sentiments of Mr. Delisle, and he would have no objection, we dare say, to come forward of his own accord to vindicate himself in this affair were any Government imbecile enough to propose an enquiry.

The affairs of the Custom House being altogether under the control of the Collector, no one has any business to bring the latter to account, or insinuate anything against him which is bad so long as the Department, controlled by Government, does not see fit to interfere or find fault with the proceedings of that functionary. The question otherwise viewed, would be tantamount to the upsetting of all the rights and privileges of authority, however much democratic liberty and its pernicious principles might gain by attempting the contrary. Collectors, like other mortals, have their troubles; and the best among them, after doing all they can for their subordinates, are sometimes exposed to the ordeal of receiving anonymous letters from some of those ungrateful beings, who pitilessly accuse

them of committing all kinds of unjust, arbitrary and immoral actions. Those Collectors who are made to meet with such ordeals, and who benevolently pardon the detected guilty, after he should have been proved of having written, for instance, *nineteen* such abusive missives (which are at this day in the Police Court) —those Collectors, we must insist, deserve the loud praises of the piously minded! Mr. Delisle may have met with the trouble above mentioned in the problematic way, and actually received the *nineteen* anonymous letters from a pet within his "Ring," and besides, very leniently pardoned the guilty pet; but what of that? Must pardon in such a case be so construed as to wear the ugly mask of fear? Decidedly mankind is too prone to subvert right for evil, and therefore deserve to be chastised. But it would be well, however, to refer to the testimony of Mr. Tide Waiter Charland, which relates to the above strange story.

There is a question which the Collector should be made to answer: How is it that so many bailiffs have followed him from the Court House?

#### RAFFLE OF THE COLLECTOR'S OLD WATCH AMONG THE EMPLOYEES! THE COLLECTOR GETS A NEW WATCH IN EXCHANGE!

The letter of Mr. Barry, kept as a back or dark ground, speaks about the Collector's old watch as having been raffled among the employees of the Custom House. The occurrence was noticed at the time by some of the city newspapers, but in a somewhat hushed-up manner, so that few outsiders really understood the case. A man of Mr. Delisle's position, official and social, and of his wealth, allowing himself to fall into such a fool's trap, for the sake of satisfying his corrupted sense of acquisitiveness, and become thereby the target for many kinds of hits, which would have wounded others very deeply, or so teasingly, as to drive them out of the country to hide themselves, this occurrence or rather the disclosure of it, did not, however, disturb the equanimity of Mr. Delisle in the least, nor interfere with his digestion. Being a shark, as before said, his sharp tri-set, saw-like moving teeth and capacious stomach are proof against such small fry. That is evident from the fact that it affected others much more indeed than it did him. Others blushed deeply and sorrowfully for him, but *he* kept his usual plausible mask of innocence and stern dignity! The chief "pilot" of the Collector and "ring," Mr. Villeneuve, was permitted to enact under the mock "patronage" of an EX-EMPLOYEE'S WIDOW IN GREAT DISTRESS !.....WITH SIX CHILDREN CRYING FOR BREAD !!! the farcical and gross deception. That disgusting melodrama cannot surely be too severely or sarcastically attacked. If abject ridiculousness is more despised than vice in many cases, this *speculation* must be sufficient to spread outside of the Custom House the profound abhorrence and almost unfeigned expression of that sentiment which every decent man there entertains toward the two authors and actors above named, who committed that mean and despicable action. Surely the public and Government will see the necessity of putting a stop to all possibilities of its recurrence.

The Collector's old watch was raffled in June, 1871, at nine o'clock p. m., at the "Montreal House," sixty-eight tickets at two dollars each having been sold among the employees of the Custom House. Several of the employees, who dreaded the consequence of a refusal, had to pay for tickets which had been given

them to be disposed of, *if possible*, and among them may be cited Mr. Tide Waiter H. Mullins, to whom Mr. Villeneuve had previously given twelve tickets, and who had to pay for the whole, as he was told by Mr. Villeneuve, although he had been able to dispose of but a few. One hundred and thirty-six dollars were realized by the raffle—and Mr. Tide Waiter John Tipson became the lucky owner of Mr. Delisle's old watch. Some mischievous wag insinuated that Tipson was so elated after he learnt that the old relic was Mr. Delisle's, that he would have went to the Collector for the purpose of thanking him, or give it back to him, as he shortly after learned that the Collector had almost cried—before witnesses, able to testify to this—at the loss he had suffered in being deprived of such a *precious old family relic*. The raffle brought in one hundred and thirty-six dollars, and one hundred dollars were paid for the new watch. The difference of thirty-six dollars went to Mr. Villeneuve, who also tried hard to keep the main one hundred until threatened with exposure.

The craving appetite of Mr. Villeneuve for raffles, subscriptions, &c., is something wonderful. He would eat "the church, the *staple* and all the *paple*," were he allowed to remain any longer where he is. He does not, however, always feel sanguine of success in planning out new operations,—that is to say, he knows that his repeated extortions made among the poor Customs people have so indisposed them against him, that he has sometimes to resort to queer ways to gain his end, as seen by the following : He had a horse—to raffle, at two hundred dollars, some time previous to the watch affair, and succeeded in getting the employees to contribute towards the "sensation," by saying that it belonged to an officer of the House, who is much beloved. The dexterous trick was discovered, but too late. In this affair, Mr. Tide Waiter Mullins had to pay heavily, viz. : twenty dollars for ten tickets.

Another affair of Mr. Villeneuve will, no doubt, prove the fertility of his imaginative power and his means of carrying out what he wishes to do in the Custom House. He got the Collector to create a new office or department in the Custom House, that of Superintendent of Tide Waiters and Lockers, which fell to the lot of Mr. O. Allard—who had, it is said, a *fat pig* much coveted by Mr. Villeneuve.

The gauging question at the Custom House was some time ago a matter of much controversy in the House, and newspapers even, but it has since subsided.

After behaving in the above exemplary manner, Mr. Delisle was further taxed with selfish motives in his kind conduct towards his chief gardener—whose two sons found somehow a "vacancy" in the Custom House—as a recompense for their father's "meritorious services!"

Whatever vague semblance of truth there may be in the preceding paragraph, the accusation contained in the present one would have to be borne out by strong testimony to receive credence : It is claimed that Mr. Delisle wrote to Mr. Dunscomb, Collector of Customs at Quebec, to get his brother-in-law, Captain Dunford, Collector of the Inland Revenue in Montreal, to apply for superannuation, he Mr. Delisle, stating that he wished to get *rid* of Mr. Lewis, the Surveyor of Customs at this port, and have this gentleman to take Mr. Dunford's situation. In wishing to do *good* to Mr. Lewis—in that way—how can it be conceived for a single instant that the said proposed operation of Mr. Delisle carried any sinister motive? One of Mr. Delisle's *protégés* was to have had, in the event of success, Mr. Lewis's situation—as a recompense for his "meritorious services."

The ghost of poor Tide Surveyor Fletcher, whose awful fate thrills yet through every one in the Custom House gifted with nerves or sensibilities, is said by some to haunt the new Custom House and to cry out every night with heartrending and loud impressive notes : " Give me my book ! give me my book !! give me my book !!! Curses on those who stole my book !" and the voice with this last shrill note is said to be no more heard ; but the presence of the poor unfortunate maniac is constantly felt by every one in every room of the House, except that of the Collector, who, it is said, has had written on his door, in invisible letters :

*Défense à Dieu,  
De faire miracle en ce lieu,*

or, " God is prohibited from working miracles here." Poor Fletcher is said to have been driven to despair and finally to madness, a madness which he to the last moment attributed to Mr. Delisle, directly and indirectly as the one who took his book. He was a good soul, a fine man, and a very efficient officer, the departed Tide Surveyor, and had got up for his own *private* use a book containing improved formulas for the measurement of vessels of all kinds of tonnage or form, which got out of his possession in some way or another. Mr. Villeneuve had got some time before from poor Fletcher a loan of twenty-seven dollars on his (useless) *bon*, which is at this day in the hands of Mr. Lawyer McCord. Had poor Fletcher been more wide-awake, he would not have asked Mr. Villeneuve for his money; but by so doing he got an " Assistant," lost his book and his mind besides. Great events often proceed from small causes.

During the winter of 1869-'70, four porters of the Examining Warehouse were turned out to freeze and starve, because they could not understand Mr. Villeneuve's system. The Collector stepped out of his office at the command of Mr. Villeneuve, and said to the four old, reliable and faithful helps : " I have to introduce *economy* !" Shortly after, however, the four vacancies were filled by men who were expected by Mr. Villeneuve to have a sound and lively understanding. Some of their pockets were, however, once found filled with costly fancy goods, &c.; and on that occasion the Collector is said to have made a splendid speech, uttering strong imprecations against the pilferers of silks, velvets, &c., but ending with " recommendation to mercy." Was the pilfering then discovered not preceded and followed by others? The poor ex-porters, named Daniel Wilts, Robert Groves, James Barry, and Richard Conway, brother of the highly esteemed Superintendent of the Lachine Canal, had distinguished themselves at Delhi, Balaklava, and during the Fenian raid in this country; their medals shone on their manly breasts; but those precious relics, which did not tick like the Collector's old or new watch, were unable to save their possessors from being discharged. Mr. M. P. Ryan, member of the House of Commons, had the noble courage to stand up in the House in the defense of those four victims of Mr. Delisle & Co., but he was unable, by warm appeals and indignant remarks, to obtain justice or redress for them.

Mr. Villeneuve's brother-in-law, Mailloux, could not, on account of his relationship with the first, have been introduced among the packers in the Examining Warehouse in the ordinary way, or hired by the day ; so the Governor-

General in Council was pleased to appoint him with a fixed and good salary. That speaks well for the influence of Mr. Villeneuve in the Privy Council. Mr. Delisle should be proud of his associate !

### MR. BARRY'S DISCARDED LETTER, REVEALING THE ABOMINABLE AND DISGRACEFUL PROCEED- INGS IN THE CUSTOM HOUSE.

MONTREAL, 30th January, 1873.

SIR,—I most respectfully beg to inform you that Mr. Assistant Appraiser Mercier has frequently stated to several officers of this House in my presence that he has frequently seen the Collector of this Port during the past two years enter the bedroom of a woman who is the wife of an employee and resides in the Custora House, and that on one particular occasion he, Mr. Mercier, had seen the Collector in the bedroom before referred to in company with the woman above mentioned, and that he, the Collector, had then and there his person exposed. Mr. Mercier states that he is prepared to make oath to the above facts, and I am prepared to prove that I have been sent by the Collector to the Grand Trunk R.R. Station with a letter from the Collector asking for free passes for this woman from Riviere-du-Loup and return, which passes I obtained from Mr. Hickson of the Grand Trunk Railway and handed to the Collector.

It is well known that the woman mentioned is in receipt of pay from the Customs, to the detriment of the housekeeper, who is in every respect her superior.

I have good reason to believe that Mr. Mercier has mentioned all he knew respecting this scandal, to several members of Parliament with whom he is acquainted, and that it is intended to have this subject enquired into during the ensuing session of Parliament. I therefore deem it my duty to place the Department in possession of this information.

And I must further inform you that it is a notorious fact that Mr. Appraiser Villeneuve has been levying blackmail on Customs officers and others, and that he uses his official position to do so ; his power and influence with the Collector being so great that officers, Customs brokers and others would not dare to refuse his frequent as well as extravagant demands. His system of blackmailing consists of borrowing money, sending subordinate officers to make purchases for him, Mr. Villeneuve, for which he refuses to pay when the accounts are rendered. I am prepared to hand you a long list of names of officers and others who have thus been blackmailed. I would also beg to state that, during the summer of 1871, Mr. Villeneuve informed me that the Collector expressed a desire to exchange his old watch for a new one, and that Mr. Villeneuve could raffle the Collector's old watch among the officers for more than the new watch would cost. He, Mr. Villeneuve, and I proceeded to Schwob Bros. and purchased a gold watch for \$100, and handed it to the Collector in exchange for the old watch. Mr. Villeneuve then caused the old watch to be raffled, and by so doing realized \$136. Mr. Tide Waiter Weir acted as Treasurer on this occasion, and that officer handed over to me the proceeds, which I immediately handed to Mr. Villeneuve, who requested the use of the money for three months, at the expiration of which time I insisted that Mr. Villeneuve should take up my note which Schwob Bros. held for the Collector's new watch. Mr. Villeneuve then said I should pay Schwob Bros., as he and the Collector had succeeded in getting me promoted ; but I would not submit to be blackmailed by Mr. Villeneuve or any other person. Consequently Mr. Villeneuve took up my note and brought it to my house on the evening of 7th March last, and on which date the Collector had sent word by Mr. O'Hara, his secretary, that he wished to see me at his private residence, he, the Collector, being then laid up with rheumatism. I proceeded to the Collector's house, was shown to his bedroom, and while there was requested to make up friends with Mr. Villeneuve

to which I replied that I could not act any longer with Mr. Villeneuve, as he had been borrowing money from every officer of whom he could obtain it. I have since been credibly informed that Mr. Villeneuve has had the use of public money for years without interest.

Trusting that this matter may be thoroughly investigated, and that officers while such investigation is pending may be protected from threats of Mr. Villeneuve and his friends, and being well aware of the responsibility I assume in placing the Department in possession of this statement,

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,  
(Signed)

T. BARRY.

R. S. M. BOUCHETTE, Esq.,  
Commissioner of Customs, Ottawa.

*This letter was never noticed by the Minister of Customs.*

You writhe, Mr. Delisle, within my grasp, and your convulsive efforts to escape from me serve but to make that grasp more firm, stronger and necessarily unpitiable. Menaces, intercessions, officious, or of any other kind, rampant pleadings, nor any sort of trick can save you from the fate which awaits you. Your friends (!) cannot save you. Your worst enemy, the Government, will not dare give you a helping hand. You know it. How despicable must you not appear to yourself in your present cringing situation! dishevelled with fear, or foaming with rage; unable to extricate yourself, nor deal any effectual blows to your tormentor and rescuer, you agonizingly look around for means to save you; but that will not do, Mr. Delisle. I hold you tight, and my hold cannot be unloosened. See the looks of your officials or subordinates; see those of others outside of the Sanctum which you have daringly and defiantly prostituted; do those looks betray any sympathy, sorrow, or tears? No! Where are your friends, Mr. Delisle? To whom were you a friend? You, a public man! You, a friend of the public! Dare say so before the public denial.

I would have saved you, Mr. Delisle, or freed you from public exposure, which you cannot now avoid; but you would not mind the kind advice, the only friendly one, which you should have taken. You preferred an ignominious end, rather than resign, as I told you, a few days ago, your office of Collector. You clutch on to the emolument, which is a straw; you foolishly hope for succor which cannot come; your wealth even cannot save you. Your repeated trips to Ottawa, nor the supplications from there, must not, nor cannot interfere with the scoriating process which I must inflict on you—for your own good!!

Hark! what sounds do you hear from the Custom House? What ominous peals so disturb and so violently proceed from the Capital? The small place is rejoicing; the other, like yourself, is vociferous, blustering; menacing and imploringly trying to prolong its existence and save—what! its honor? its “clean” hands? No! honor with you all is but a name, a lie, a thunderbolt which must destroy you all. Power, you all wish to keep. Injustice, you all wish to exercise. Corruption, you all wish to extend. But the employees and the people bid those whom they invest with power to deal harshly towards the lawless and immoral set, and save the departmental and general institutions from a crushing and disgraceful downfall.

Prostitution of all kinds has for a long time made a great show in Government offices and electioneering matters; but exultant evil must at last come to an end,

and by its overthrow permit reason, virtue and justice to appoint in its stead new men to carry on the progressive and moral destinies.

That exposed sum of evil which must necessarily bring on the small and large events predicted above, within almost breathing time, linked together by a similar nature and operating in the same way, are so identical as to defy the most dexterous in establishing a difference. In the small case the facts are established as previously mentioned, and find a sequel in the following *exposé* :

The first three paragraphs of the above letter addressed to the Department establish a vile case, such as has never before occurred in any Government office in the country. There is no use mincing expressions to qualify it. The Custom House of Montreal has been made, with the smiling or sneering consent of the Minister of Customs or Department—a BROTHEL ! It has been a *brothel* for several years, to the knowledge not only of the author of that letter and Mr. Mercier, who witnessed the *liaison*, but of many others in this House and Parliament as well. How many besides, among the press, merchants and others, were also made aware of that scandal ? But all and every one almost shirked from meddling in the task of getting it to explode. Mr. Thomas Workman, member of the House of Commons, over a year ago, brought the matter before Mr. Tilley, then Minister of Customs, and was promised by the latter that an enquiry would *shortly* be instituted into it. But it was only a promise ! Ministerial promises to Opposition members, even in such cases, need not be kept ! There is no harm to shove off with a lie a commoner of that class ! It is even questionable whether Mr. Tilley, or any other member of the present Government could very well have found it convenient to act with rigor towards any kind of prostitution varying more or less from that in which one and all of them have dipped their "clean" hands.

The disclosure of that crime, for so must be called the impudent vice which so boldly has defied anger, contempt, and sorrow, has led those who entertain those sentiments into the belief that the common decency with which such evil generally clothes itself with is no more required. Any other but Mr. Delisle, after the disclosure, would have been influenced by shame, if not remorse, and removed elsewhere the quarters of his *facile amours*. But *he* ! sullied and steeped, dyed, dried, and used in every kind of official process, imposed by *authority* to have the highest seat in—the Church—Harbor Commission, and elsewhere, never would have thought of such a condescension to vulgar prejudices. Not *he* !

By providing the new Custom House with a new character, and appointing an engineer to heat the premises and drive its hoisting and *lowering* power, Mr. Delisle imagined, no doubt, that he deserved well of his country and the public. Such ingeniousness is not common, and should be taken into consideration by both. The accommodating engineer who hoists and conveniently *lowers* within the House its status and his own, and who, for a salary and by official *authority*, is bid to disown conjugality and paternity as nonsensical things—although apprenticed for *ten days* on a harbor dredge by the *re-elected* President of the Harbor Commission—has been declared by the Inspector of the Board of Works as inefficient, and endangering the lives of the whole household. But the Collector relies on the ENGINEERING which is *still going on* ! !

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