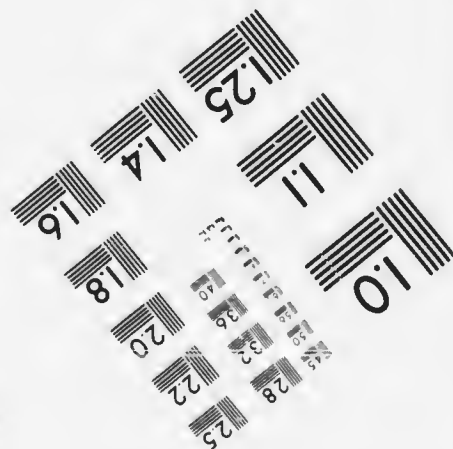
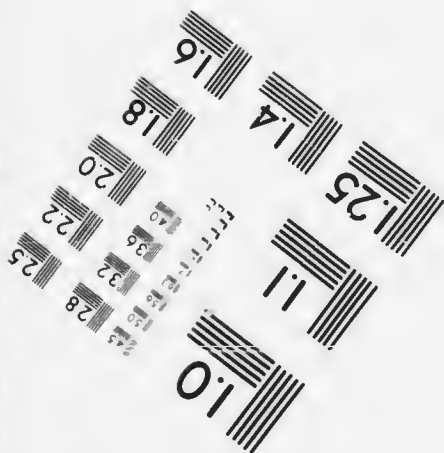
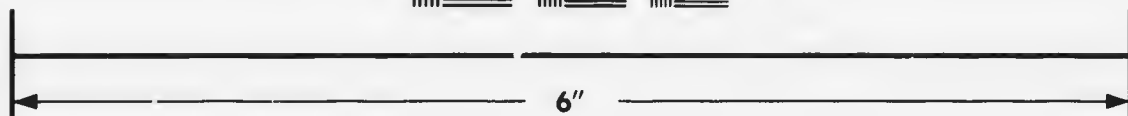
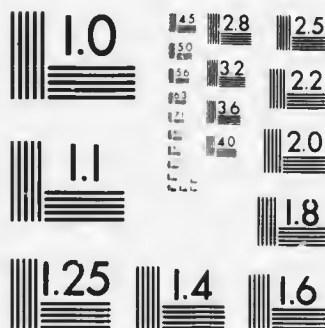


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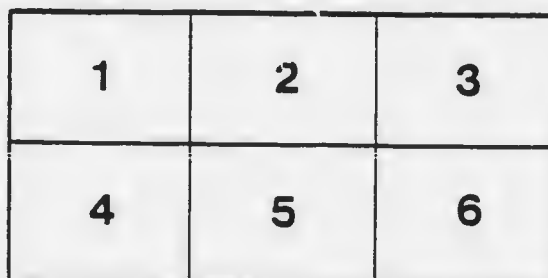
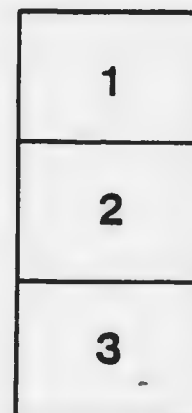
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READ AND PASS IT TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR.

W. L. Ryan

TENTH LETTER

OF

W. L. Ryan

L. M. N.

THE CELEBRATED CORRESPONDENT

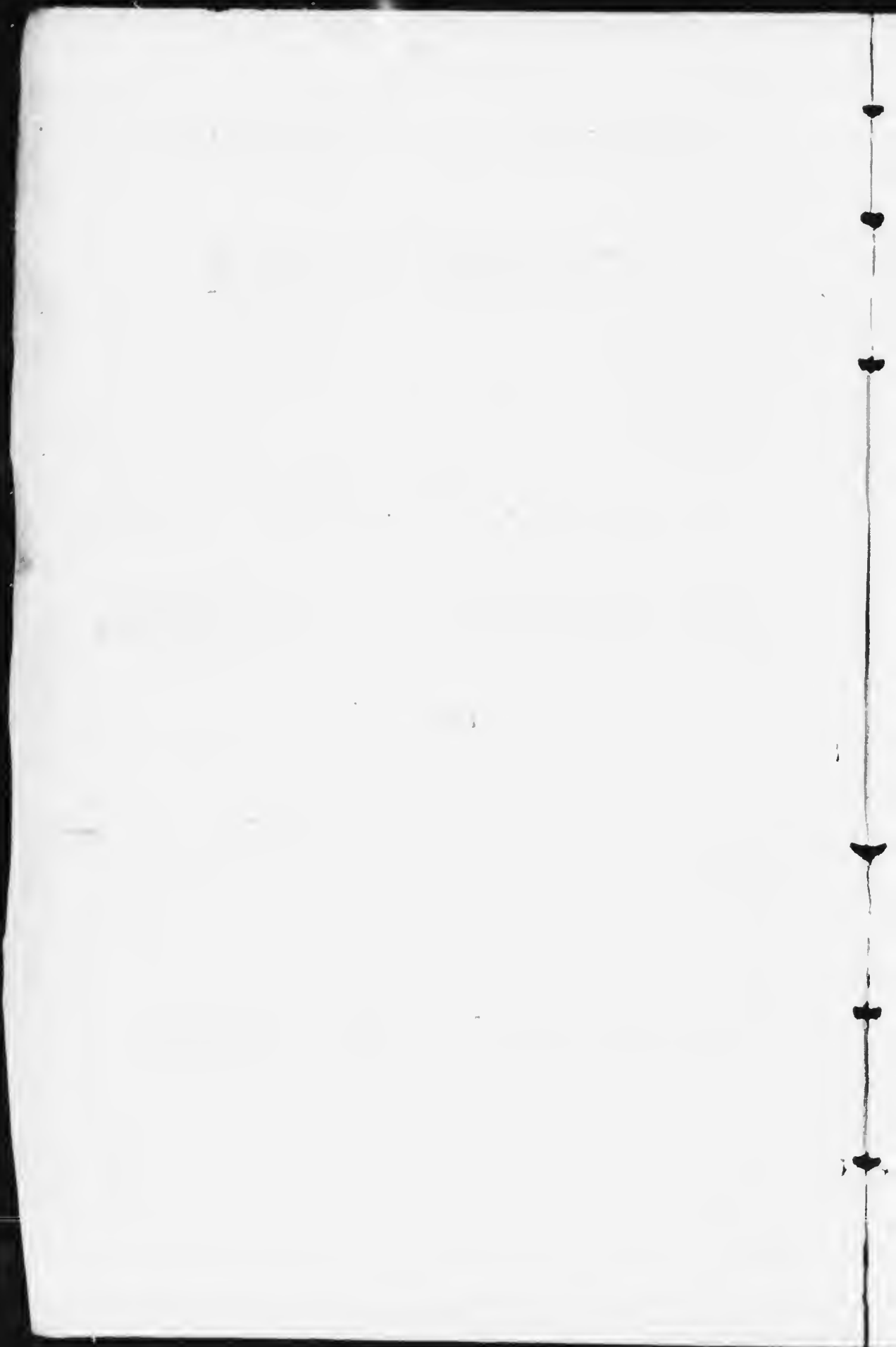
OF THE

NEW-YORK DAILY EXPRESS,

ON

CANADA AFFAIRS.

1837.



From the New-York Express, June 29.
Canadian Affairs.

The following closes the first series of letters from our Canadian correspondent. The series now concluded have embraced many interesting topics of discussion from the first settlement of Canada down to the present day. Both the geographical and political character of Canada has been shown with a master's hand, in the letters we have published, and the attentive reader must have added not a little to his former stock of information in regard to Canadian men, manners, politics, &c., the general character of the people and the condition of the country. L. M. N. will continue his correspondence with the *Express*, and his letters hereafter will embrace a variety of topics interesting to the miscellaneous and literary reader.

**CANADIAN CORRESPONDENCE—
 L. M. N.—No. X.**

MONTREAL, JUNE 19, 1837.

To the Editors of the N. Y. Daily Express.

GENTLEMEN.—I have already mentioned that our Lord the King was graciously pleased, in 1835, to send out three Commissioners to inquire into and report upon the grievances of Canada. One was Sir Charles Grey, a Judge from India, and a Tory; another, Sir George Gipps, an artillery captain, and Democrat (out of Canada); and the head and chief, Lord Gosford, a "country squire," a gentleman with no "opinions in particular." Wickied people have roiled at the appointment: but as the Ministry, having all the information before them, wanted, like some of your broken merchants, "nothing but time," no three gentlemen could have been more judiciously selected. Of the expense of this commission I can know nothing until an answer is returned to the enquiry of Earl Ripon; but of its value I may judge from the statement of the noble Earl, that long ago, when he was Colonial Secretary, there was in the office sufficient information upon every thing connected with Canada. The reports of these commissioners have been published, and have found their way back to the Province, covering many voluminous pages of that paper, significanty called *fool's-cap*. They were in the House of Commons called *unstatesmanlike* and a disgrace to its table. I know not what it requires to disgrace that august table, but these reports are certainly remarkable for two things—all the *arguments* are in favor of the Canadian or American party, and all the *conclusions* in favor of the British. Unlike the

circumspect Judge, who pompously charges the Jury to find a verdict for A. if they cannot upon their consciences believe B's witnesses, these Commissioners after declaring the evidence of one party to be credibly conclusive, incontinently demand that judgment shall be given in favor of the other. The party with evidence is guilty of a crime that puts it without the pale of common justice—the majority speak "French."

These reports are signed unanimously by the Tory, the Democrat, and the Gentleman of no opinions "in particular;" but as disagreement frequently existed, the Tory or the Democrat respectively adds a codicil or appendix to many of them, as long as the report itself, in which he explains in what manner he differs from his colleagues on every particular. Poor Lord Gosford appears sadly discomfited between the wild elephant and the tame one, but he signs them all, expressing regret only at the dissensions of his conferrers; to consign to perdition the liberties of the people was of minor consequence.

When James the Sixth came to London, he attended a Court of Justice, where the counsel for the plaintiff performed so admirably that the King advised the Judge to give judgment at once in his favor, but his Honor told the Sovereign that in England they still followed the perplexing custom of hearing both sides; whereupon he listened patiently to the counsel of the defendant, who acquitted himself so well that the pious monarch ejaculated "Guid Lord, they're baith right." Poor Lord Gosford, with equal *connoissance de cause*, without precisely understanding whether his friends were "baith right" or "baith wrong," could only express sorrow when they differed in after-claps to a unanimous report. The two antagonist knights left Canada before these disclosures saw the light, leaving the hermaphrodite Peer to heal the breaches.

The British ministry having the "time" it required, has carried recently through the House of Commons a set of resolutions based upon these reports, which declare it unadvisable to make any concessions whatever to the Canadian or American party, and advisable that the Governor shall take, without regard to the Legislature, as much money as he thinks proper to divide among the Colonial officials.

From the earliest periods of English history, the right of raising taxes has belonged to the people, and that of distributing them to their representatives, which principles have been extended to all Colonies having independent Legislatures: and the British Parlia-

ment itself, after the infamy of the revolutionary war, declared, in 1778, that it had not the right of taxing the Colonies. The English House of Commons, holding the purse-strings of the nation, exercises a control over Government by refusing supplies to an unpopular ministry, and the Colonial Assemblies claim the same right, nor has it ever been disputed; but now, when the Assembly of Lower Canada attempts to act upon its privileges, the Imperial Parliament interferes by ordering the Governor to take the supplies without reference to the representatives of the people, who have withheld them because their grievances remain unredressed.

The plea of course is stern necessity. The king, kind man, cannot permit the salaries of his servants to remain unpaid. As these servants of kings are apt to be masters among the people, it is no wonder that the Canadians are in no great hurry to pay them until public officers become, according to the American doctrine, the people's servants, and do something for their money. Nothing is said about useless drones fattening on sinecures: it is for suffering judges that cash must be stolen. The judges of course do suffer with the other ravenous creatures; but as we give a *credit price*, that is, as much for one as you give for three, they might afford to wait a little until an ear is opened to the prayers of the people, and then they would recover their pay according to law, in the Yankee fashion.

But after all, what matter is it to the people of England whether we pay our judges or not? If we choose to dispense with courts of justice altogether—to leave our debtors unmolested, or to invite rogues into our drawing rooms instead of confining them in prison, why need it trouble Johnny Russell or his willing majorities, who vote as European parliaments always vote when the liberties of America or an American can be assailed. If destiny has ordained that we must be miserable, for God sake let us have the choice of miseries. If we prefer the endurance of certain evils, in hopes of dissipating others swaying over us, what business is it to people 3000 miles away?

The only difference between free and arbitrary governments—between your government and that of Turkey—lies in the control which the people have, by their own voice, in the management of their affairs. In Canada we have an American theory of government and a Turkish practice. Theory says, all are equally eligible to office: practice gives every lucrative office to "Britons," and

none to Canadians. Better make the Canadians at once a degraded "caste," or make religion and origin tests of office, than thus to trifle with delusive hopes. Theory says, the people have the undisputed right of controlling their own money; practice says, the executive shall take what the people's representatives refuse to vote. Better adopt the more honest custom of Turkey. Let the Pacha collect his tribute directly and economically from the people, who will then know what they pay and what becomes of it. Why support a useless drove of revenue officers to collect revenues by law, if they are to be plundered without law after they are collected into the treasury?

A British House of Commons that will, at the bidding of a minister, vote away its own brightest privileges, merely because the application is only to be made in a colony, is forever unworthy of respect both abroad and at home, and the Canadians, believing the protection of a government and the obedience of a people to be co-relative obligations, will justly consider themselves absolved from all allegiance to the British crown. Never again, I am confident, will they abuse themselves by petitioning the adder ear of that British parliament. They will look for sympathy to a powerful nation on their immediate borders, and for protection to their own "right arms."

What will they do? They will not, like a crowd of Spaniards or Italians, run out into the market-places and cry "down with the King," and be themselves shot down directly by a troop of soldiers. No, no; they are reading American history, and already prove themselves apt scholars. Throughout the country they are practising the lessons taught by the people of Massachusetts, between the years 1768 and 1775, who began by learning how to live without their oppressors, and ended by learning how to thrash them. Allegiance will be a loose bond until the people are *ready*, and then be entirely thrown aside. Some trifling circumstance will produce collision—blood will be spilt, which like a spark on gunpowder will create an explosion to the uttermost parts of the provinces, and cast the yoke of monarchy across the Atlantic, never again to pollute the Western hemisphere.

Can Canada oppose the gigantic power of Great Britain? Yes, she can, and prove victorious. A guiding destiny controls the revolutions of America. Her free born sons came not into the world to remain the Helots of Europe. Look to the immense world stretching from Cape Horn to our own borders, and does not the unerring lesson of uni-

versal experience teach us that the Spirit of Liberty has directed the councils of every state, whatever its position, whatever the origin of its inhabitants, that has been *willing* to be free, and that the Genius of America, has in every instance preserved her children from harm, while she has driven from their territories the enemies of their repose. An American needs but to raise his hands and the chains fall unshackled from his arms.

Although, however dark may have been her prospects, *every* American State has been triumphant in her contest with Europe. I see the European sneer at the idea of rebellion in Canada. These sneers are not victories. General Grant declared, that with five regiments he could drive all the disaffected in the old colonies before him. Pity he was not employed, for Burgoyne, who more economically offered to ride through the country with a "troop of horse," was not precisely successful as a victor. He and his army "rode through the country" certainly—but as prisoners of war.

The present North American colonies contain a population nearly equal to that of the old colonies at the commencement of your troubles; but, leaving the others, I shall confine my observations to the Canadas, and principally to the lower province, which relatively, now stands in the position of Massachusetts in 1779. The population of that State was then 340,000; ours is now over 600,000. Of these, three-fourths are of French extraction, united almost to a man. Of the remaining fourth, one-half are Americans, who would never fight to *maintain* European supremacy; the remaining half contains a majority of Irish, about whom there is "no mistake," so that the upholders of monarchy, whenever a contest begins, would be reduced to the British merchants and officials of Montreal and Quebec, and their immediate dependants. Upper Canada is more equally balanced; but in a day of trial she would, like the old colonies, notwithstanding their previous indifference, make common cause with an abused neighbor.

The white population of your thirteen States could not, in 1775, have much exceeded two millions. Your Tory, or British, party, was stronger than ours, for it vaunted that it could eat up the rebels if it only "got leave." You had half a million of slaves to keep in subjection, forming a majority in the Southern States and one-fifth of the entire population of the whole. You had thousands of Indians, under English influence, hovering about, ready

and excited to butcher every defenceless family. There was a province in your rear filled with British troops, who commanded all the Northern waters. In front you had the broad Atlantic, and Britain's thousand ships ready to attack at any season of the year, and there lay your thirteen colonies, a mere ribbon of 1,400 miles in length, and your two million of inhabitants, almost within reach of their ships' guns. Your far west was then the Susquehanna and the Alleghanies. By what miracle did you succeed?

How much brighter are the prospects of Canada! Massachusetts, which may be considered to have commenced the war singly, had then but 340,000 inhabitants. Lower Canada has 600,000, and with the Upper Province may form a compact million. We have a few Tories, who, like yours of old, would be loud when protected by British guns, and get paid for it when the troops removed, as they *pay* ships—with a coat of tar, and feather ornaments. We have no slaves to rise upon their masters: we have no hostile Indians to dread. If they acted at all it would be as allies to the Canadians. Instead of savages, we have seventeen millions of sympathizing freemen on our borders, from whom thousands, whatever might be the laws of neutrality, would come to our assistance, to prevent European butchery from again saturating American soil with American blood. Instead of 1400 miles of seacoast constantly exposed, we have only one inlet—at Quebec, only two-thirds of a mile broad, and closed by ice four months out of twelve. By commencing a revolution in November, we should remain in peaceable possession of the country for six months. Nor would it be safe at any time to send ships of war into the river. They would be hemmed in by sunken rafts, "snags," and "sawyers," that could be placed at an hour's notice. Then there is the danger of fire, from which there could be no escape in a narrow channel, with alternately a strong current setting one way and a strong tide the other. The whole British navy, if it came here, would in 2 years be destroyed by fire-vessels. The cities of Montreal and Quebec might, until starved out, remain in the hands of the British, but the troops could never go into the country. In winter, in an excursion of ten miles, the frost alone would provide frozen toes, frozen fingers, and frozen noses enough to keep half the detachment six months in hospital. In summer our clay roads would seldom bear up artillery or heavy wagons, and even troops unable to wade through them would have to straggle through the fields,

picked off by any one who could load a gun behind a tree.

Your public men signed the Declaration of Independence, with halts about their necks. No refuge was provided for them. Officers in case of temporary reverses have only a step across the lines for safety. Your commerce was destroyed—you could procure necessary supplies from no quarter. Our inhabitants have only to direct their trade to the States whose water communications extend to our neighborhood, and carry on uninterruptedly a regular business, without feeling the inconveniences of war. You had difficulty in raising money.—“Patriot” loans have since been so profitable to capitalists, and the American Revolution so universally successful, that no trouble would now interfere on this point. The agent of Lower Canada would raise loans even in London on better terms than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because *this province is prepared by not owing one dollar of debt.* Her legislators have not been duped by the cry of “public improvements,” and are saving themselves and their posterity, to raise loans of money, which, whatever be the pretence, goes in Colonies, for the most part into official pockets, and more completely fetters the people. Not only are we out of debt, but we have means to pay. The Assembly has declared that it will confiscate all the property of the British American Land Company, whenever it has the power. These lands are on the immediate borders of Vermont and New Hampshire; and then we have interminable forests of pine, as yet unsurveyed. It would be a glorious speculation for a Company of enterprising individuals to furnish the money requisite for carrying on the war, and receive the payment in wild lands.

It would not require a great sum. We require no Navy or expensive Embassies—a trip to Washington costs next to nothing.—Forts and fortifications are unnecessary; the ditches and fences, running in all directions, on our farms, already form sufficient breastworks, which with *abatis* of fallen trees, would provide lines of defence at no expense. As to artillery, the enemy would leave as many guns about the country, sticking in the mud, as would be wanted. Small arms would be wanted for the troops, but every house is already furnished with some sort of a shooting instrument, as well as with *a man who knows how to use it.*

Massachusetts, with uniform population, furnished 17,000 combatants in each of the years 1774 and '75. There are in this pro-

vince 125,000 capable of bearing arms, that is, men between the ages of 16 and 60. The militia returns, if completed, after deducting exemptions, would probably show about 80,000 militia men. There is not on the American continent any people so well qualified for becoming soldiers as the French Canadians. Your people are too impatient of control, and too speculative to remain in a camp when they see more profitable employment elsewhere. They consider themselves of too much importance to be privates; and like the crew of the eastern schooner who “concluded to lose half a day” when the sails were being carried away, they are apt to parley with their officers. The Canadians on the contrary, would delight in a camp-life: with regular pay and good clothing any number could be kept together. They are hardy, active, patient and obedient and would be entirely devoted to the wishes of officers in whom they placed confidence. As boatmen and *voyageurs* for the northwest, their merit has been long established, and their behavior as soldiers in the last war drew forth constant eulogiums from British Commanders. Though admirably qualified for soldiers, they want officers—good officers will make good soldiers of any men. There are some in the country—there are plenty in the States. Even the cadets of your military school at West Point would be found on the road to Canada at the sound of war, anxious to put in practice the lessons now being taught to them, lest they should never in their lives have another opportunity. And then from your Havre packets, how many a sear-worn veteran whose blood has sprinkled the grass from the Guadalquivir to the Rhine, or from the Rhine to the Niemen, would be seen debarking, his stiffened limbs invigorated like the war horse at the trumpet sound, and hastening to efface the stain which he may imagine the last reverses of France have left upon his military character.

It is my opinion that England will never coerce the Canadas, if they only declare they will *not be coerced.* There would be difficulty in raising the means in the House of Commons, because so strong a party, upon a principle of interest, considers that Canada would be more profitable to Britain as an independent State than as a Colony. But suppose they commence hostilities, what power could they bring to subdue the natural and physical strength of the country? Every European soldier landed upon our shores costs, with his equipment, be it recollected, 100 pounds. A pennyworth of powder and ball will prevent his doing any mischief after he has landed;

or the penny may be saved by simply extolling the advantages of the United States and the facilities of desertion. The school-master has, unfortunately, been abroad among the soldiery, and taught them that they are responsible agents, and not passive instruments in the hands of despotic power. I doubt if Irishmen would fight against the Colonists, especially when it would be so "mighty convenient" to pay a visit to their friends or cousins at Albany or "Balty-more." Indeed, it would only be necessary to commence a canal or rail-road within a hundred miles of the lines, and whole regiments, whatever their nation, "pioneers and all," would emigrate with drums beating, preferring digging, at a dollar a day, to sixpence and a red coat, to be the mark of a musket ball whenever it strayed thirty yards from the barracks.

With the passing of a bill for robbing the Canadian Treasury will commence the separation of Canada from the British Crown. I speak not thus confidently, because *I wish*, but advisedly, because *I know*. Though a nominal allegiance may for a while continue, it will be nominal. The people have wary leaders, who will not hurry them into premature or partial rebellion merely to gratify the impatience of city loungers, but preparations are already commenced that will render them invincible whenever they choose to say, "*we are ready*." I allude not to the proceedings of simultaneous public meetings, but to the still small voice which, moving from house to house, from neighbor to neighbor, slowly, silently and irresistibly animates, ennobles and unites the determination of a people. War is a game of desperate chances, never to be commenced

when it can be honorably avoided. The horrors of rapine and bloodshed, the ignominy in comparison with a base political ignominy. Better expire in martyrdom for a country's wrongs, than be a wretched slave, insensible to her miseries. Better that our bones should lay whitening the fields, or be raised in one vast monument over the departed liberties of the country, than that they should live and move to witness her degradation. What is there in life so lovely or in death so horrible, to make men quietly submit to threatened insolence of office?

The British Government has assumed a position reconciling no dispute; leading to no result; which it cannot itself defend, except upon the plea of temporary necessity—a plea which if once admitted, would sanction every deed of enormity that man or government ever did or ever can commit. That government has, with an imbecility inexplicable, stripped all extraneous matter from the question of Canadian grievances, and reduced the whole to a single point of contest—a bare naked point upon which the whole world must declare Great Britain *wrong*, and the Canadians *right*, whatever may be the ulterior consequences.

The gift of foresight is misnamed. To know the future we need only look back upon the past. The scenes of the old colonies have been enacted in the new—the same catalogue of charges against the British Crown has been nearly refilled. The result *must* be the same. For Great Britain there remains but one choice—quietly and peaceably, while she may wish to retain honor, to relinquish a country that she cannot retain, that now spurns her protection, and which can never flourish while it continues.

I am, your very obedient.

L. M. N.

