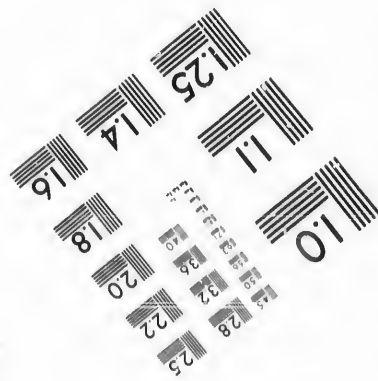
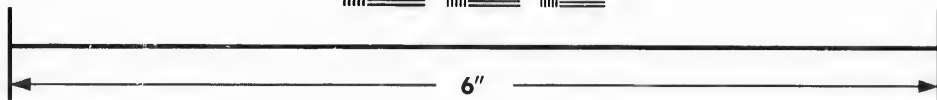
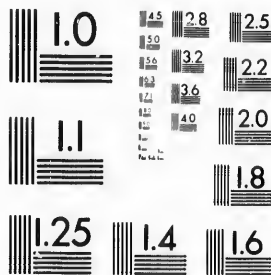


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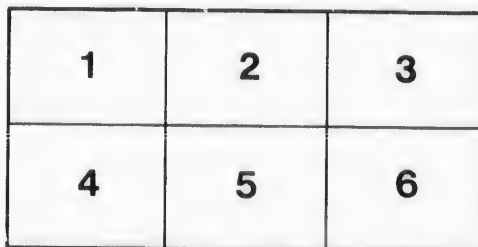
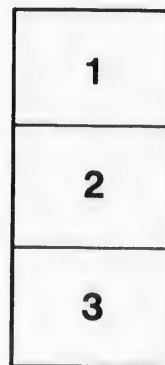
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A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

ON

ST. GEORGE'S DAY,

23RD APRIL, 1862,

BEFORE THE ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY OF MONTREAL,

BY THE

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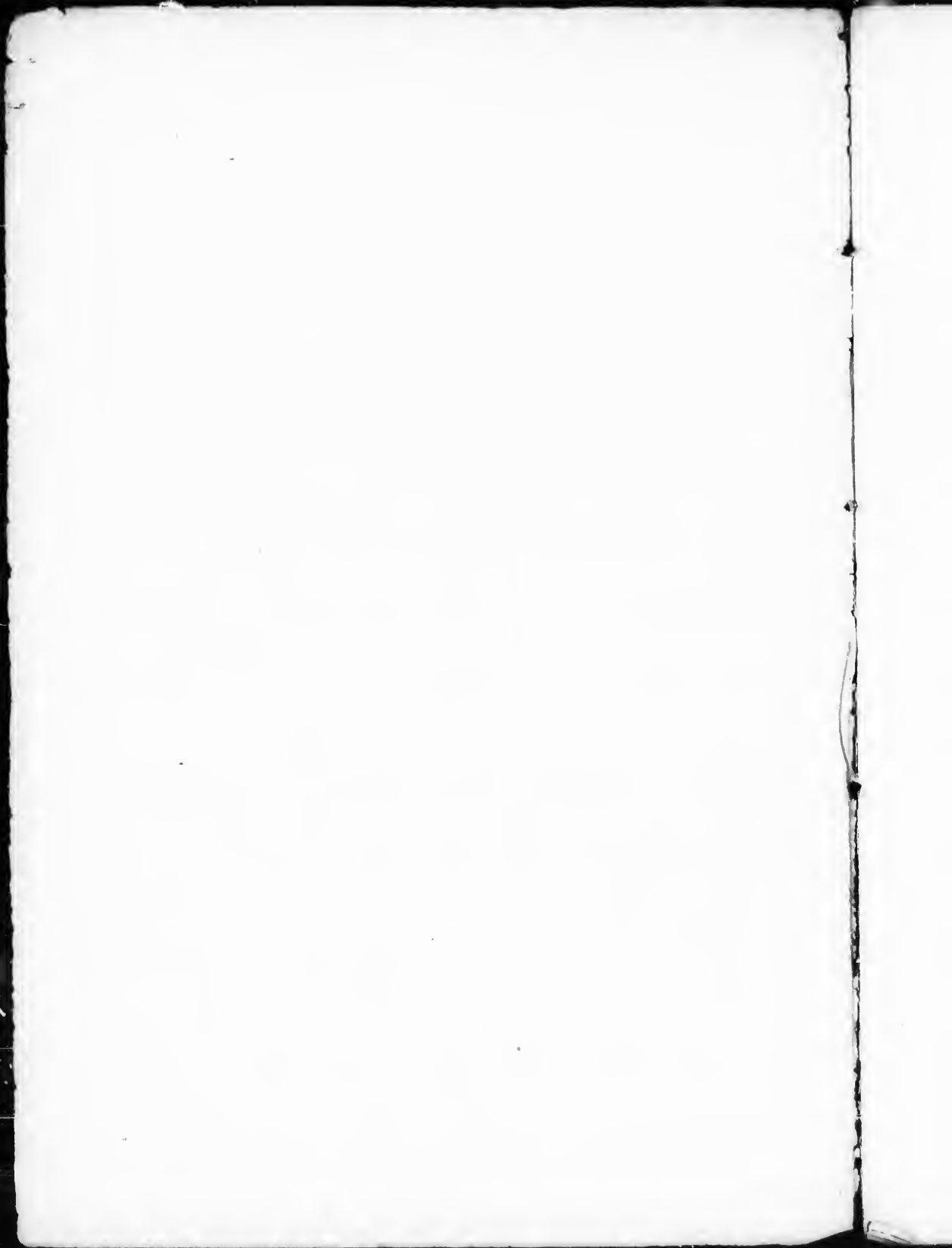
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DISCOURSE.

“For my brethern and companions' sakes : I will wish thee prosperity.
Yea, because of the house of the Lord our God : I will seek to do thee good.”
—Psalm 122, verse 8.

The Society in whose behalf I am now called upon to speak, has been established with the benevolent purpose of relieving the pressing wants of immigrants of English origin, giving them counsel and aid as to situations and employment, and helping them in extreme cases to proceed to their “destination.” Such objects require no vindication. Every one acquainted with the most common facts of our social condition will admit at once the expediency of some organization for the accomplishment of these objects and the duty of humanity they imply.

In their benevolent endeavors the members of this and similar societies, encounter, and may always lay their accounts to do so, no small degree of trouble; but it is not all trouble; it is an honorable work and one that yields a good reward; for, to the right kind of men, a greater pleasure there cannot be, than the consciousness of those affections and efforts through which we have the power of making light the burdens of the troubled hearts of our brethren and inspiring them with encouragement and ability for the business of life.

It may be allowed, that in the institution of the St. George's Society, something is due to the sentiment of kindred or country. It will be a long time before the love of man as man will be powerful enough generally to warrant dispensing with the sympathies and emotions with which men have ever worshipped "the native land." These are not to be dispensed with, though history furnishes instances that prove their tendency to engender sometimes national arrogance and self-conceit; that is their abuse; but if ever there subsisted favourable conditions for their operation they subsist now and here for the blameless triumphs of the charitable national societies whose objects are generally such as I have described those of this society to be; and, therefore, the sentiment of nationality, which I think is weaker among persons of English origin, certainly less demonstrative than among most others, may surely on the present occasion be properly appealed to; is it nothing with you, that they whose wants and sufferings you are asked to relieve are your brethren from England?

Asking this question I doubt whether it will elicit from you any emotional response such as might be thought its due. Were a question of similar kind put to a Scotch Highlander his reply would give an unequivocal and cordial intimation; if put to a native of Ireland, his reply would be instantaneous and decisive; if to a native of France, it would be sufficiently express and animated. It is wonderful in what various modes the character of a people, through remote ages of their

after history, is determined by the historical events of the nation. The ancient antagonism between the Teutonic and Norman elements has left its traces not only on the external circumstances of diverse portions of the English, but on the internal character of the whole nation; and hence, while there is no country in the world where provision for the poor has been made so systematically and completely, no country in which benevolent institutions are so numerous and afford to so vast a number of individuals sustentation and other advantages of a superior nature, this great expression of moral principle seems to have no particular connexion with the sympathy in question; it has little to do with the sentiment of nationality; it is not much because they are Englishmen that the poor in England are sustained so liberally, but because the expediency of this sustentation is clearly seen and the duty of it at once religiously acknowledged.

The case is different with us in regard to our brethren from England. Here are no circumstances of the same kind to repress the natural sentiment, nor the like inequalities of condition. It is evoked rather than repressed by the circumstances in which we are. The poor that arrive here bring with them their honest pride of country; they have their tender reminiscences; they have the deathless impressions of the holy places, the great houses, and harbours, and hills, and dales, once familiar to them. There are thousands of home recollections that constitute a material part of their life of thought, and which form points of sympathy with all

that know the same places, speak the same tongue, and have been habituated to similar modes of thought, association and action. These things, unnoticed and exerting comparatively little influence at home, become in the foreign land a spring of action by no means insignificant; and in you, I trust, will combine with the lessons of wisdom's holiest lore to give heart and hand, more than usual energy to seek the prosperity of your brethren, and to do them good.

The prospect of a greater number of immigrants than usual arriving this season is a special reason for some additional energy and enlargement of the Society. The unfortunate conflict in which the United States are engaged may for some time to come incline intending emigrants to give the preference to Canada. Supposing the conflict to terminate as soon as seems to be commonly believed, it must require many days to allow the swell of the tempest so to subside, and all embittered feelings so to fall asleep that there can arise to emigrants from England a fair prospect for peaceful settlement in the States. The temporary distress, too, in some of the manufacturing districts, attributable indirectly to this conflict, may also make it eligible for many persons to emigrate hither; if they emigrate at all, it will probably be to Canada, as being most within reach, and presenting, not indeed the hope of harvests of Australian and Californian gold, but the fair and far less precarious prospect of remunerative labor. It may serve to reconcile them to the enterprise, and at any rate soften the pangs they feel upon wending

so far from home, to know of the existence of such societies as this, and to have the assurance that they have brethren here who feel towards them as the hearts of Englishmen ought to feel; and, without doubt, there is no good man in England, be he rich or poor, who will not be disposed to augur all the more favorably of a people among whom there are those that carry out the friendliest designs towards their countrymen with becoming spirit and earnestness of purpose.

So long as Canada remains a part of the Colonial Empire of the United Kingdom, the objects contemplated and so far actually accomplished by the charitable National Societies have an irresistible claim upon the inhabitants of the country. The claim is founded not only upon the "respect" of community of origin, but on the loyalty which is found here in the most remarkable manner to draw into one the rudest and roughest natures as well as the most cultivated. I do not say they would not exercise their functions under any circumstances, but certainly, on the supposition of a separation between the Colonies and the Mother Country, he would be a hardy prophet that should predict that the poorer classes from England would enter Canada, a generation hence, with the manly and just confidence characteristic of those who feel they have the right, and be at the same time received and welcomed as they now are, being citizens of the same empire.

Since the question of separation is closely connected with the circumstances of the poorer classes that may

emigrate from England hither, and is now being agitated with extraordinary pertinacity, I may perhaps be excused if I should say something more expressly upon the subject.

It is said that the cessation of the defence of the colonies by the Imperial arms, is an opinion that is strongly advocated, and is likely to gain many favorers. That it will have many favorers, may be readily believed, since it involves the idea of relief, immediately, or more remotely, from a great expenditure—the sole argument that is necessary for the conviction of the large number of persons who judge of every public measure exclusively in an economical light. I suppose it must be with the public measures of a state, as it is with the management of their affairs by individuals. Saving is not always the greatest gain, and bread cast upon the waters may be found again after (not) many days, and that perhaps a hundredfold. The army is not always, what those persons suppose it, the consuming glory in which the national wealth is wasted; it is as often the salt that preserves it from corruption, and, in the present instance, will probably be found one of the conditions of the increase of their stores. However, this is not the point I desire to touch upon; neither is it the fitting time to speak of other misapprehensions of facts upon which conclusions favorable to the measure of separation are founded, and of opinions that bespeak utterly erroneous calculations of the tendencies of our relations internal and external, and of pernicious import, not only to Canadian inte-

rests, but the interests of the poorer classes of our brethren in England and in the United Kingdom generally.

The proposition I would maintain is this; that, as things now stand, it is the duty of the Imperial Government to hold these Provinces a Dependency, defending it in case of invasion, if need be; because, as such, it is necessary as an asylum for the poorer classes that require, from want of employment or other causes at home, to immigrate hither. I say the duty of the Imperial Government, because it is a moral agent and not merely a combination of powers to advance the views which a particular school of politicians may hold in regard to the material interests of the state. When a nation founds colonies, it is not entirely a question of expenditure, whether they should be abandoned. There are moral considerations that can only be overlooked by those who hold the national honor too cheap, and the moral progress of dependent countries at too low an estimation. But the English Government stands, as it has long stood, pre-eminent for the degree in which it has realized the highest conception of what a state ought to be; and it is incredible that such a Government should inflict, by the act in question, I shall not say an injustice, but what would be an excessive hardship, upon a large portion of the poorer classes of Her Majesty's subjects, the precluding them from the possibility of settling in another part of the empire where they have the right to settle, and free from odious distinctions and painful constructions.

It will not probably be denied that the British Provinces of North America are, of all others, the most accessible to immigrants. The voyage is comparatively short and rather pleasant, in the right season taken. Almost every year sees a reduction in the charges, and there is no part of the country where they go to settle that may not be reached without difficulty. There is abundance of uncultured soil fit for cultivation, and all that has been yet occupied is but a small portion compared with the regions that remain for settlement. This is the country to which myriads of immigrants *can* come, who cannot or ought not to go elsewhere.

Besides those that immigrate for settlement on land, there are thousands of others that find occupation in the stores and offices of the merchants, in schools, in colleges, in churches, on railroads, &c. To all these this is even a kind of England not utterly dissimilar to what the great England is to many others. The classes in the Old Country whence these proceed, are surely relieved by the expeditions of their more adventurous brethren. But what I am concerned to remark is this, that the classes of persons I have mentioned have here, as they ought to have, a part of the empire into which they can come to reside and do the work of life, without any great revulsion of feeling.

It is a great error to suppose that immigrants to the British Provinces come filled with hatred to the Government of England, that their hearts are alienated from her institutions and people, and that they utter

nothing but complaints of grievances and words of rage. The truth is that by far the most of them, habituated to respect the rights of others whose properties and honours are secured by law and long possession, cannot easily divest themselves of attachment to things which, in the Old Country, they admired and almost adored, and so far as my experience informs me, the conviction is complete that emigrants generally, with many undying regrets and recollections, retain a pleasing sense of their connexion with the great country whose children they are, and a desire that this connexion be perpetuated. With the exception of a few political characters in Upper Canada during the insurrection of 1837, the loyalty of the immigrant population was worthy of admiration, and it was his just confidence in them that induced Sir Francis Head to hazard the defence of the Province upon the volunteers' fidelity. As it was then, so is it now; And what I am now to ask is this: are the feelings of these classes of persons worthy of no respect? Are their home attachments, affections, and loyalty, things of no value? When work is not in demand, and emigration must be submitted to, will the Statesmen of England tell them they may go to Russia or to—the United States? Will they say, do not suppose we can respect your feelings of kindred or country; do not expect we are to keep in pay our battalions to hold Canada for you—that we are to bear the cost of your inconvenient loyalty? They who have gone before you, you who purpose to go, and whose children are doomed to emi-

grate in time to come, what right have you to expect reserved for you any part of the contracting crust of the surface of the earth where you can find a home and the welcome of your contrymen reserved for you, at our expense,—the possibility of holding, under the sovereignty of your country, a farm to plough, or a creek or river to sail a craft in.

To the poorer classes, this is the practical signification of the question of withdrawal of Imperial protection. It amounts to this, for though some ten or twelve years might elapse before the consequences showed themselves in force, the disappointment of many, the passive reception of injurious influences ever at hand on the part of others, and the consciousness with others of being treated with indifference, would in no long period work a world of mischief. Upon the declaration of such an intention a return of the dark day, a thing that still lives among the recollections of the older Colonists, would be memorable in the history of Canada, and would be found, I believe, with no white mark in the annals of the poor of the United Kingdom.

I am far from desiring to convey the impression that it would be unjustifiable in the Home Government, under any circumstances, to dissolve the connexion between these Colonies and the Mother Country. There are conditions that would render the severance not only justifiable but necessary. It might be necessary, if, for self-defence, the whole military force of the empire were needed in opposition to a very formidable

adversary ; and there are conditions which might be imagined depending on ourselves to justify it. Widely prevailing disloyalty, the curse of cowardice, systematic mendacity, as to the fulfilment of engagements, in the course of which even a whole people may earn for themselves the name of liars—systematic repudiation of just debts, in the course of which a whole people may earn for themselves the name of thieves—these would justify it, but these are things which we shall always, I pray God, have as little reason to fear for Canada as we have to desire them.

“ Come the eleventh plague, rather than this should be,
“ Come, sink us rather in the sea.”

So far as the solution of the question depends upon the readiness and ability of the Colonies to sustain an equitable share of the burden of military defence, the agitation on this subject will, it is to be hoped, be soon terminated. It is fair that they should sustain a portion of the cost. Reluctance to the making sacrifices and exertions of our own, would naturally suggest the suspicion that our devotedness to the Mother Country is not sound, and has its origin in selfish considerations only ; and sufficient ground for such a conviction would be fatal to our cause. The future and permanent interests of this country are of such a magnitude that almost any sacrifice that can be borne ought not to be reckoned too dear a price to prevent us being sent adrift. Whatever upon this matter may be finally determined by the Canadian Government, the spirit with which the people are disposed to act, is worthy of all praise, and, if

not blown out by an over-parsimonious policy, will hold here, both out of loyalty to the Crown and for the sake of their brethren of the poor in England, who arrive to share the blessings which God has bestowed on us, a fair field where no specially disheartening nor revolting circumstances paralyze their exertions, and where no "iron enters the soul."

To our countrymen who from time to time become resident amongst us, and the whole present population of this vast territory, the connexion with the Mother Country is of infinite value. Independence would be a calamity, as it would be to the child made orphan in the earliest days of youth. It would fall, and fall calamitously, wherever the ground in its course became rough and dangerous. We have been living and breathing hitherto on the jural and moral capital imported from Europe, *i. e.*, so far as we are concerned, from England and France. Have we not been spending rather than originating? Is not the framework of our incipient civilization rather incoherent? Is it not of too accidental a character to give one the pleasing conviction of the certainty of its enduring? Does it not need time to become compact enough even not to retrograde? Time must elapse before the jural sentiments of a people so widely scattered grow vigorous, before there spring up the ready and cheerful acquiescence in their obligations and a clear perception of rights. Depend upon it, it is but the early spring with us, and men have hardly as yet begun to sow the seeds of the life-sustaining harvest. And even where they have, there

are but too many hands to cast in their handfuls of tares. We must have patience till the great body of the people have a clearer perception of their public duties and an intenser appreciation of them; till it is the glory of the Judges and other officers of the law, to make its authority omnipotent and reach into the darkest recesses of the bush; till it is the glory of Juries, to do their duties gravely, sagaciously, and energetically; we must have patience till the Ministers of Christ's Holy Church shall have wrought in their flocks a far more minute and efficacious indoctrination of all the virtues that appertain to public, domestic, and individual life; we must have patience till the amount of perjuries is reduced to the minimum, and till the social life is so formally and morally constructed that the domination of the blackguards is an impossibility in the midst of us; till all the essential elements of social order shall have acquired a firmer footing, we are not in circumstances to be left alone and entirely out of the reach of the parental arm.

I have dwelt upon this topic longer than may seem warrantable, but it is by no means foreign to the benevolent designs of this Society. The prosperity and well being of our brethren who are now with us, and those who may arrive amongst us in time to come, would be but little consulted and ill served, if we deemed it a matter of no moment whether they are to exist in, or be introduced into a disorderly, unprincipled and lawless community. "Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of

God." There are things, quite as essential to the prosperity of a people as brotherly affection, however intense and beneficent, however active and unstinted it may be. There are other things, without which, the funds of all benevolent societies, if multiplied many thousand times, would be lavished in vain and fall on the hungry waste, fruitless of any extensive and enduring results. The righteousness by which, it is said, a nation is exalted, the manly earnestness and moral illumination that spring from regular devotion to religious duties—the true gain of godliness, the ready obedience to law arising from thoughtful conviction of its perfect necessity—Christ's portion for Cæsar, these are words of God by which men have always lived and by which alone they can live rightly—the oracles that are ever floating down to us from the throne of the Almighty for our instruction. Nor do I believe that they have here fallen upon unattending ears. It would be hard to forget, standing in this place, how much has been done by Christ's Holy Church for our people's redemption in the life of time and to the life eternal. But what is all that has been done, to what remains to do? Oh ye undying souls of men, when will you grasp the true idea and collect your strength for the work of the task that is given you. For your own sakes—for the prosperity of your brethren and companions—yea, for the sake of the house of the Lord our God, do all good with all the will and power that you have. Amen.

