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# CANADIANA.

A COLLECTION OF CANADIAN NOTES.

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## *REMINISCENCES OF COLONEL CLAUS.*

By Mr. ERNEST CRUIKSHANK.

### I.

During the past summer it was the writer's good fortune to find in the possession of a gentleman living at Niagara, Ont., a small volume which had evidently been used as a letter-book by Col. Wm. Claus, Deputy-Superintendent-General of the Indian Department in Upper Canada in 1813. Into this book he would seem to have copied all official letters written or received by him between the 24th of June and 15th of August of that year, and abstracts of the principal speeches delivered by Indian chiefs at the various Indian Councils held by him during that period.

Besides amplifying and elucidating Claus's interesting MSS. "Account of the Operations of the Indian Contingent," preserved in the Canadian Archives, these documents will materially assist in filling up certain gaps in the military correspondence of that campaign. Besides some thirty letters of more or less importance, it contains a record of the proceedings of seven Indian Councils. On the fly-leaf there is written a nominal return of the Indians killed at or near Niagara from the 13th October, 1812, to the 6th of

September in the year following, from which it appears that there were two Cayuga chiefs, two Onondaga warriors, and one Oncida warrior killed at Queenston, two Mohawk warriors killed in the action near Fort George on the 27th of May, 1813, a *little* chief of the Delawares, a Chippewa chief from La Cladu, two war chiefs of the Caughnawagas, a Nippissing chief, and two St. Regis warriors killed at the Beechwoods on the 24th of June; a Cayuga warrior killed by a round shot in a skirmish near Ball's house on the 17th July; four Ottawas and one Mohawk killed in a skirmish on Ball's farm on the 17th August, when two others were wounded and ten taken prisoners; a Cayuga warrior killed there next day, and a Tuscarora chief killed in a skirmish on the 6th September.

On the 24th June, 1813, Claus writes from Louth to Lieut.-Col. Bisshop, commanding the advance guard of General Vincent's army, that he puts under cover a letter from Captain Kerr, giving an account of an action fought that morning between a party of the Six Nations, the Seven Nations of Canada, and some of the Lake Indians and a detachment of the American army under Col. Bustler (*sic.*) with two field pieces, and he continues: "It is with pride that I mention that notwithstanding the severe loss the Indians have met with in the death of five of the principal chiefs and warriors, and upwards of twenty severely wounded, several prisoners were taken in the woods and brought in without the least injury to one of them. The number of killed and wounded is not ascertained; we know of the above only at present." Kerr's letter unfortunately does not appear to have been preserved.

Most interesting is the light thrown by these documents on the affair of the 8th July in which an American foraging party, under the command of Lieut. Eldridge was cut off by the Indians, hitherto regarded as one of the most obscure and painful incidents attending the investment of their lines

at Fort George. Lossing, the latest American writer who deals with these events, says: "The impetuous Eldridge dashed forward into the thick wood and fell into an ambush prepared for him by Blackbird and his followers. The foe was repulsed at first, but overwhelming numbers crushed Eldridge and his little party. Only five escaped. The prisoners and wounded were butchered and scalped by the Western savages, whose conduct was marked by the most atrocious barbarity." Then in a note below, quoting the following from Capt. W. H. Merritt's journal: "The poor devils were crying and imploring me to save their lives, as I was the only white man present. The Indians promised me the lives of the prisoners should be spared — would only frighten them a great deal to prevent them coming again. I made a solemn vow if a prisoner was killed never to go out with an Indian again." He goes on to say: "The savages violated their pledge, and butchered their prisoners with a barbarity too revolting to be repeated here. . . . The excuse made for the murder of Eldridge was that after he was made prisoner he treacherously drew a concealed pistol and shot one of the chiefs through the head. This was Blackbird's reason for murdering *all!* . . . . An investigation proved the assertion of the savage leader to be wholly untrue, and this crime (strange as it may appear) stands uncondemned by British writers, one of pure barbarian cruelty." How far these details were purely imaginative can best be judged by a comparison with the official papers I am now enabled to cite.

On the 7th of July, 1813, Lieut.-Col. John Harvey wrote as follows to Colonel Claus:—

7th July, 1813, 10 p.m.

You are to move forward a body of Indians to-morrow morning in the direction of Fort George, to take post in front of —— house, where some medicines belonging to the army were deposited, which it is the object of this

movement to recover. Captain Merritt will be sent early to-morrow morning to bring them off. A company of the King's will escort them. The officer in command of the Indians should point out to the Indians the necessity of remaining in front of the house till the waggons have returned.

Thirty-six hours later Claus addressed this report of his operations to Harvey in reply.

10-Mile Creek, July 9th, 1813.

I received your note of the 7th about 12 o'clock the same night, and I immediately went to camp and collected a body of Indians. I gave the necessary directions to Captain Norton. At daylight, 100 and odd left camp. About 3 p.m. information was received that they were engaged with the enemy. I collected the Indians that remained in camp, and was just proceeding to join them when a party appeared with five prisoners. I found that after the defeat of the foraging party near Mr. Ball's, on the Two Mile Creek, a reinforcement of about 1,000 men advanced as far as the piquet by Mr. Butler's, and returned almost immediately, which appears by the enclosed brigade-order, No. 3. The riflemen who were out for the purpose of covering the foraging party retired as soon as they perceived the Indians. From what I can collect, the killed and prisoners amount to upwards of 100. Of the latter, there are twelve; of ours none were killed, two Indians and one interpreter wounded, the latter very slightly in the hand. I used every argument to get the prisoners from them. I succeeded in getting three. The remainder were to be delivered up to-day with assurances that no harm should be done them, but I found this morning that they were asked for last night. I was astonished.

The above is the information I have been able to collect from Interpreter Lyons and the chiefs. Captain Norton I have not seen, nor has he made any report.

I beg to mention the names of Lyons and Langlade, lieutenants and interpreters, who led the Western Indians. The latter was wounded in the arm. I enclose a sketch of the ground as pointed out by Lyons.

The sketch to which he refers has also been preserved, and helps materially to fill in the outline of the skirmish already given. The waggons and their escort, approaching by the "Swamp" road from the Ten Mile Creek, were discovered by an American piquet stationed at John Butler's house, numbering thirty or forty men, which turned out at once to resist their advance, but soon retired towards Fort George. Six houses, those of the two Butlers, two Balls, Lawe and Secord, occupied the site of the present village of Virgil, then known as the Cross-roads. The Indians scouting through the fields surprised the foraging party on the right of the main road, several hundred yards in advance of this piquet. The men composing it, seeing their direct line of retreat already cut off, scattered and ran down a ravine towards the lake in hopes of gaining their lines. Their pursuers in four parallel files dashed across the road to head them off and shot down or overtook most of them.

As to the manner in which the remaining prisoners were finally delivered up by their captors, Claus remarks in his "Account of the Operations of the Indian Contingent," that Blackbird "complained that a person had been very troublesome, and had insisted in getting his prisoners from him. He had promised them to me and only wanted to keep them one night." On being asked who this person was, he pointed out Colonel Young, of the 8th. A Montreal newspaper of that year states that the prisoners were regularly ransomed by that officer, and Captain Merritt distinctly says that all the survivors except Eldridge were mercifully treated. So much for Mr. Lossing's assertion that the savages "violated their pledge and butchered their prisoners."

But it soon became known that the Western Indians,

whom General De Rottenburg described in an official letter as "a most ferocious and savage set," had not abstained from scalping the dead and maltreating their prisoners, in conformity with the instructions they had received upon joining the British. In fact, there is a record of a letter from Claus to Elliott, in which he observes that the Indians sent by the latter to join the centre division, had taken "thirteen prisoners and near a hundred scalps" on this occasion. As soon as a rumour of this reached De Rottenburg's ears, he caused Harvey to address the following letter to the Deputy-Superintendent-General:—

Headquarters, July 15th, 1813.

DEAR SIR,—With a view to prevent those acts of barbarity which others have reported have been committed by some of the Indian warriors on the persons of the prisoners who have fallen into their hands, the Major-General takes upon himself, until the decision of the Board which is appointed to report upon the subject is known, to order the payment of \$5 for every American prisoner who is brought to headquarters taken by the Indians alive and unhurt; only half that sum will be given for a wounded prisoner.

His Honour wishes you to communicate immediately to the assembled chiefs of all the nations the substance of this note, and that you take that opportunity of impressing on them his most anxious wish that they and all their warriors should abstain from every act of cruelty and barbarity towards their prisoners, and that from the moment an enemy surrenders he should cease to be regarded as a foe.

To this Claus replied on the following day :

10-Mile Creek, July 16th, 1813.

I proceeded this day to St. David's, and communicated the wishes conveyed in your note of yesterday.

The Indians, with the exception of the Ottawas and those from the West, state that complicit obedience has been paid to the instructions given them. The enclosed speech by

the Blackbird, speaker to the Bastard, the Ottawa Chief, will shew His Excellency the treatment his people have received from the Americans, and he says what was done on the 8th was done in the heat of the action.

Address from Blackbird, Speaker to the Bastard, an Ottawa Chief, to W. Claus, D.S.G., 15th July, 1813.

BROTHER,—At the foot of the rapids, last spring, we fought the Big Knives, and we lost some of our people. When we retired, the Big Knives got some of our dead. They were not satisfied with having killed them, but cut them into small pieces. This made us very angry. My words to my people were, as long as the powder burnt to kill and scalp, but those behind us came up and did mischief.

BROTHER,—Last year at Chicaga and St. Joseph's the Big Knives destroyed all our corn. This was fair, but they did not allow the dead to rest. They dug up their graves, and the bones of our ancestors were thrown away, and we could never find them to return them to the ground.

BROTHER,—I have listened with a good deal of attention to the wish of our father. If the Big Knives, after they kill people of our colour, leave them without hacking them to pieces, we will follow their example. They have themselves to blame. The way they treat our killed and the remains of those that are in their graves to the west, makes our people mad when they meet the Big Knives. Whenever they can get any of our people into their hands they cut them like meat into small pieces. We thought white people were Christians. They ought to show us a better example. We do not disturb their dead. What I say is known to all the people present. I do not lie.

BROTHER,—It is the Indian custom when engaged to be very angry, but when we take prisoners to treat them kindly.

BROTHER,—We do not know the value of money. All I

wish is that our people receive clothing for our prisoners. When at home we work and hunt for those things. Here we cannot; so we ask for clothing.

BROTHER,—The officer that we killed you have spoken to us before about. I now tell you again, he fired and wounded one of our men. Another fired at him and killed him. He wished to take him prisoner, but the officer said "God damn!" and fired, when he was killed then.

Blackbird's bitter indictment of the frontiersmen is singularly corroborated by a letter written by Col. Alex. McKee to Joseph Chew on the 27th of August, 1794, from the rapids of the Miami. After describing the advance and success of Wayne's army, he remarks: "The American army have left evident marks of their boasted humanity behind them. Besides scalping and mutilating the Indians who were killed in the action, they have opened the peaceful graves in different parts of the country, exposed the bones of the consumed and consuming bodies, and, horrid to relate, have, with unparalleled barbarity, driven stakes through them, and left them objects calling for more than human vengeance."

The only reference made by General De Rottenburg to this affair in his official correspondence, which I have been able to find, is contained in a letter to Sir George Prevost, dated from Twelve Mile Creek on the 9th of July, 1813, when he says: "A party of the King's and some Indians were sent yesterday to recover some medicines and stores buried near Fort George in the retreat. They were successful, and in a skirmish they had, the Americans lost an officer and twenty men killed and ten prisoners. The Indians who were commanded by Norton only lost three wounded."

Merritt's account of the skirmish is sufficiently circumstantial and interesting to warrant reproduction, especially as his book is rare.

“Next day the Indians were sent to the Ten Mile Creek with directions to move under Captain Norton's orders. At two o'clock next morning, 8th of July, they were to place themselves in the woods fronting Ball's, in order to cover me in getting off the medicines, having received orders that night to accomplish it if possible, as it was of the utmost importance to the army at this time. At the dawn of day, I went down to the Ten Mile Creek. Nobody knew of the Indians advancing; no waggons provided; everything in the greatest confusion. I got a detachment of the King's Regiment; went on the Swamp Road, and sent the waggons by St. David's. We did not reach the spot till eight o'clock. Had the medicine chest dug up, loaded, and sent off before I learnt Norton was on the advance; sent the soldiers back with the waggon.

“Lieutenant Collis of the King's, the subaltern, and myself went over to Squire P. Ball's and partook of an excellent breakfast with the ladies, and then went out on the main road to find Mr. Norton. The instant we arrived, the scouting party had commenced skirmishing. Collis returned to his men. Mr. John Ball and myself were the only whites present, except John Lawe, a boy, 13 years of age, whose father was made prisoner, dangerously wounded, on the 27th May, at Fort George. His elder brother was killed at the same action, seven balls passed through him. This little fellow was determined to avenge the loss his family had sustained, and would not be persuaded to leave the field till his mother, after the fight was nearly over came out and took him away in her arms by force.

“We were anxious to get away as we were both mounted and had no guns. Whenever we attempted it, the Indians followed. As we had come to where we had no business, we were under the necessity of remaining and sharing their fate. We were provided with a couple of red coats which had been left with Mrs. Lawe, a necessary precaution to prevent being shot by our own Indians. We rode on in

advance, and then retreated, endeavoring to bring the States troops out, as the Indians were very anxious to meet them.

“At length about 500 infantry with a few dragoons came out. As soon as they made their appearance the greater part of our Indians retired to the woods by Chorus's, which was far the best position. Accordingly we followed them and lined the front of the woods and edge of the road. The enemy came on within 300 yards of the road, when a party of dragoons made a charge. We were ready to receive them, but at a few yards distance they wheeled about and went back. A few of our foremost men gave them a shot, which the States troops returned at 300 yards distance, which gave our men courage to advance. We had but sixty men near us, the rest being half a mile in the rear. Ball and myself dismounted and urged them on. As the States troops perceived we were advancing in earnest, they retired very precipitately. As soon as the Indians saw this they all ran on shouting in the most hideous manner.

“A party of the enemy, consisting of two officers and fifty men, were sent out from Mrs. Butler's on Ball's road with an intention of flanking us. I pointed them out to the Indians who ran to the right and completely cut them off from the main body. Only seven of them made their escape.

“I gained my horse, left off the pursuit, and turned my attention to the prisoners. The first one or two were brought out from the wood at the end of the lane by Blackbird, the Indian Chief, who threatened them with instant death, accompanied by gestures not of the most pleasing or agreeable description. I rode up between them and was very shortly threatened myself for interference. The poor devils were crying and imploring me to save their lives as I was the only white man they saw. After getting an interpreter, they promised the lives of the prisoners should

be saved, and would only frighten them a good deal to prevent them coming again. I made a solemn vow, if a prisoner were killed, never to go out with an Indian again. Fortunately all that were taken were mercifully treated except Adjutant Eldridge, who forfeited his life by firing at an Indian while a prisoner. During the whole of the affair the ladies were eye-witnesses from J. and P. Ball's windows.

"We had two Indians wounded. The United States loss was fifty killed and taken prisoners. Our Indians followed them to Butler's meadows. Directly after, the States' men marched out nearly their whole army. We quietly retired within our pickets."

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*A BALLAD OF THE BLOCKADE OF QUEBEC  
IN 1775.*

Looking through the pages of my French scrap-book, I recently lit on the following rude, but inspiring lay, on the siege of Quebec in 1775-6, when the rebellious New Englanders, under Montgomery and Arnold, crossed our border—many never to return.

I had been allowed to copy the martial effusion from an antique, dusty, parchment-bound MS. A dear old friend, now no more, the Hon. Louis Panet, Senator, whose sires had played such a manly part in curbing the audacity of the foreign invaders, had been good enough to place at my disposal this prized *incunabula*, as he said, for the benefit of Canadian annals.

It was, I believe, an heirloom from his distinguished father, the Hon. Jean Antoine Panet, first Speaker of our Canadian Commons, in 1792.

My genial, nonagenarian friend (he died 15th May, 1884, aged 90 years and two months), used to take particular pleasure, not only in quoting from memory, but also in singing this war-like ditty, evidently composed when the

schoolmaster was not yet abroad in Canada, and when grammar and prosody did not inspire more respect than the Yankee raider on our soil.

CHANSON DE GUERRE DE L'ANNÉE, 1775.

“ Le trente-et-un décembre passé  
 Montgomery nous a attaqué.  
 Marchant à la tête de ses brigands  
 Guidés par quelqu'un de nos ‘habitants’ (1)  
 Déterminés à prendre cette ville,  
 S’imaginèrent, que c’était bien facile  
 Par Près-de-Ville, braves, ils sont avancés,  
 Où nos canons les ont bien supplantés.

Arnold, ce fameux maquignon,  
 Vient avec sa troupe de fripons  
 Pour s’emparer du Sault-au-Matelot  
 Ils s’y renferment tous comme des sots,  
 Disant : “ Nous sommes maîtres de la place,” (2)  
 Qui pourrait à présent nous faire face ?  
 Nous allons joindre dans quelques moments,  
 Montgomery avec ses combattants.

Carleton, dans ce même instant,  
 Fait partir un détachement,  
 Qui va cerner, saisir ces scélérats,  
 Leur faisant mettre à tous les armes bas, (3)  
 Les retirant des maisons, et des caves,  
 Où ils étaient tous cachés comme des braves  
 ‘ Aux Récollets,’ ils sont tous conduits, (4)  
 Mais non pas pour prendre l’habit.

<sup>1</sup> Col. James Livingston and his 300 French Canadians.

<sup>2</sup> The invaders held in reality, “as masters,” for four hours, a portion of Sault-au-Matelot Street.

<sup>3</sup> Consult for particulars Thayer’s (an eye-witness) narrative of the siege.

<sup>4</sup> Judge Henry, one of Arnold’s corps, then a youthful volunteer of 17 years, was incarcerated in the old Recollet Monastery, burnt in 1796. It stood partly on the site of the Anglican Cathedral.

Incontinent l'on sépara  
 Les officiers d'avec les soldats,  
 Au séminaire, ils sont tous renfermés,  
 Fort indignés d'être considérés,  
 Etant d'une noblesse originaire,  
 Accoutumés aux travaux mercenaires,  
 De forgeron, tanneur et cordonnier,  
 D'habile tailleur et de fin perruquier. (1)

Maudit rebelle que feras-tu  
 A présent que te voila battu ?  
 Demanderas-tu pardon de ton Roi ?  
 De ce que tu as osé mépriser la loi,  
 Convertis toi, crois moi, devient fidèle,  
 Ouvre les yeux sur ton sort malheureux,  
 Tu changeras tes projets dangereux.

Arnold si tu viens rattaquer,  
 Tu te feras bien étriller,  
 Quoique tu oses, écrivant au Congrès,  
 Dire que dans peu tu 'auras enlevée,  
 Cette ville orgueilleuse de Québec.  
 Mais prend bien garde d'y être mis au sec,  
 Crois moi, tu sais bien mieux maquignonner,  
 Que tu saurais nous épouvanter.

Celui qui a fait la chanson,  
 Est un de ces braves lurons,  
 Qui te feront éprouver vivement,  
 Ce qui t'en coûtera dans ce moiment,  
 Où tu paraîtras devant nos murailles,  
 A qui tu n'as pu donner de courage,  
 Que par l'espérance d'un grand pillage."

J. M. LEMOINE.

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<sup>1</sup> The old song entirely agrees with Col. H. Caldwell's (an eye-witness) description of the invading host (though Bancroft tells a different story). "blacksmiths, shoemakers, tanners, etc.," says Caldwell, the companion-in-arms of Jas. Wolfe-

*SIR ETIENNE TACHÉ, K.C.B.*

On a visit to London in November, 1858, I had the pleasure of meeting several celebrated Canadians, among others the late Hon. George E. Cartier (afterwards Sir George, Baronet), the Hon. Alexander T. Galt, (afterwards Sir Alexander, Knight), the late Hon. Etienne Taché (afterwards Sir Etienne, Knight) and the late Hon. Mr. Justice Day. The title "Honorable" in virtue of their official status in Canada as "of right" is, I believe, a "moot" point without Canada, but the title or prefix is always used by courtesy. Sir George Cartier and Sir Alexander Galt had been presented at "Windsor" immediately before Sir Etienne Taché was summoned to be knighted. I had been living in the same quarters in London with Sir Etienne Taché and Judge Day and having visited France with Sir Etienne, he mentioned to me in the course of conversation the ordeal he had just passed through at Windsor and the result.

"You see, so he put it, I had been summoned to "Windsor" and Cartier told me that I must be dressed *en règle de la Cour*, that when brought into the presence of the Queen, I was to make so many steps, and when just near enough, was to kneel before Her Majesty, who would touch me on the shoulder with a sword and then tell me to rise as "Sir Etienne Taché." I went to "Windsor" determined to do my *devoir*, but not very sure that I might not forget my lesson.

Well, listen. I went to "Windsor," was received and guided by gentlemen-ushers who knew where to pass me along this grand old fortress of William the Conqueror.

They took me to a small room where the door was open, and to my joy Prince Albert was there, standing with his back to the fire and holding by the hand one of his younger sons, Prince Alfred.

So soon as he saw me he came forward and took me by

both hands and welcomed me most cordially, saying that he and Prince Alfred were so glad to meet me and that they expected me.

The Queen was not there; but before he had let go of my hands, I heard a rustling of a lady's dress and turning my head found myself face to face with Her Majesty, (till then hidden from me by the open door.)

I forgot all about Cartier's lesson as to so many steps, &c., &c. From the window still alongside, the Queen took a short sword, I bent the knee at her feet, but before I had got well down she had touched me with the "magic wand" handed it to Prince Albert and saying "Rise Sir Etienne Taché," raised me up by giving me both hands. She saw I was white-headed.

"Now, Sir Etienne, please tell me whether you prefer my addressing you in French or in English."

"Your Majesty, although I speak my mother tongue, in common with more than a million of Your Majesty's loyal subjects in Canada, personally I speak English and French."

A half hour was passed in "sweet converse" about Canada with this happy family, and Sir Etienne Taché remembered it with honest pride, and said so.

Shortly afterwards, we went to France together and when at the old Cathedral of Rouen, this gallant old Knight told me he sought the monuments of his ancestors whose home and resting place were there, and then bid them a sorrowing and final "à Dieu."

In Paris, during a long walk we took to the Bois-de-Boulogne of a cold December day (and it can be cold in Paris), he complained of suffering from the cold which probably induced the disease from which he died a few years afterwards on his return to Canada.

W.B.L

## Queries and Replies.

M. J. G., in a recent number of "At Dodsley's" in the *Montreal Gazette*, reviews Col. Butler's new book on Gordon, and mentions the following interesting fact:—

"As we have said, Colonel Butler writes like all Scottish gentlemen, if he is Scottish, about Scotland, with an ever-recurring tendency to whoop it up about the heather and the braes. In a hysterical preparatory chapter he tells us of all the Gordons who died for the old Stuart race and the old faith. He makes a ferocious assault on William of Orange who, he says, 'began to adopt towards the Highlanders a triple policy of treachery, bribery and emigration.' But he gives us some information which we have never seen stated before, viz:—that six years after the battle of Culloden, David Gordon, the great-grandfather of General Gordon, died at Halifax, Nova Scotia; and the son of David Gordon, William Augustus, and grandfather of Gen. Gordon, was at the siege of Louisburg and at the capture of Quebec. These are not uninteresting facts, and no doubt the grave of the old Gordon can be identified in Halifax still."

THE NAME QUEBEC.—*Appropos* of the notes on the origin of the word Quebec in the last number of CANADIANA, the attention of your readers should be called to a late and excellent authority—Dr. Silas Rand's recently-published English-Micmac Dictionary. On page 177 Dr. Rand writes under the word " 'Narrows'—in a river or bay, 'Këbëk.' This is, beyond question, the origin of the name of the city of Quebec. The French pronounce *Quebec* not Kwe-bëk, as the English do, but Këbbëc, the exact pronunciation of the Indian word. The 'Narrows' above Halifax, and a narrow place in the Liverpool river, just below Milton, are thus named by the Indians." These statements are repeated under the word "Quebec." It is hardly necessary to point out how this interpretation is strengthened by Dr. Rand's authority.

W. F. GANONG.