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CANADA'S GREATEST CHAPLAIN

Bishop Alexander Macdonell (R.C)

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Ottawa.



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During an international war such as the present one, when our patriotism must be of a higher, purer, more self-sacrificing nature than usual, the study of Canadian history becomes a special duty. Among the many heroic characters in the history of our country, the figure of Canada's greatest chaplain—Alexander Macdonell, First Bishop of Upper Canada—looms out of the cloud of the past to challenge and inspire the men of this generation. In the whole history of Canada there cannot be found anyone who was more passionately patriotic than he. It was his fortune to have lived during the one war in the world's history which, for extent of territory engaged, and importance of principles at stake, can alone be compared to the present war—namely the War which began with the French Revolution and ended only some twenty-five years later, after two continents had been deluged with blood.

Twice a founder of a regiment, twice in the midst of national rebellions, on two continents a military chaplain on the firing line—his life is a singularly romantic and inspiring one. Only the barest outlines of his career as a military chaplain and statesman will be traced in this paper, his work as a churchman being outside of our scope.

MAIGHSTIR ALASTAIR

Alexander Macdonell was born on 17th of July in the year 1762 (and not in 1760 as is sometimes stated), at Inchlaggan in Glengarry, Scotland. He belonged to the Macdonell clan of Glengarry. The first thirty years of his life were much the same as that of other Scottish priests of the time. His primary education he received in Gaelic and English in a school held in a cousin's house near his home. As, owing to the penal laws, a priest could not be educated in Scotland, young Macdonell was sent for his classical, philosophical and theological studies first to the Scots College in Paris and then to the Scots College in Valladolid, Spain, where he was ordained priest in 1787, in the twenty-fifth year of his age. He returned to Scotland and was placed as missionary priest on the borders of the Counties of Inverness and Perth, the highest inhabited parts of the Highlands of Scotland. He remained there five years. It was a transition period in Scotland. The clan system had begun to collapse after Culloden, and the land passed from the clans to individual proprietors. Under the changed economic conditions—resulting partly from Glasgow becoming a great industrial centre,—the landlords found it more profitable to raise sheep than men. They began a policy of wholesale eviction. Not allowed by the rapacity of landlords to live at home, the Highlanders were prevented by the British Government from emigrating, as it was feared they would go to the United States. The Admiralty had given orders to "press" all able-bodied Highlanders found on emigrant ships. It was at this juncture in the year 1792 that Father Macdonell, or as he was then called, Mr. Macdonell, or, more familiarly in Gaelic, Maighstir Alastair, quit the secluded life of a country priest and entered into a wider field.

He went to Glasgow and obtained for his evicted parishioners, as well as for some shipwrecked Highland emigrants whom he had harboured, employ-

ment in the recently established cotton mills. In the summer of that year 1792, he took up residence in Glasgow, the first priest to live there since the Catholic Chapel and priest's house had been burned by the mob during the Gordon Riots twelve years before. Within a few months, he brought 600 Highlanders to Glasgow and got them employment. He at once opened a Catholic chapel and preached the Gospel in Gaelic and English without being molested—though the Penal Laws were yet on the Statute Books. The following year Britain declared war against the French Republic, and the consequent business depression soon threw the Highlanders out of employment.

FOUND S A HIGHLAND REGIMENT.

It was at this critical moment that their priest, with that resourcefulness which never failed him, conceived the idea of embodying his Highlanders in a Catholic corps in His Majesty's service under the command of their young chief Glengarry. This was a time when no Catholic could join the British Army without forswearing his religion. He organized a meeting at Fort Augustus and proceeded on a deputation to London, where he was graciously received by King George III. and was entirely successful. The First Glengarry Fencible Regiment was accordingly raised in 1794, as a purely Catholic corps, the first since the Reformation. Rev. Alexander Macdonell was gazetted as Chaplain, law to the contrary. It is no exaggeration to say that, with the organization of this Catholic Highland regiment, Alexander Macdonell enters the stage of the world's history. His zealous and far-seeing patriotism was henceforth one of the forces which were to build up the British Empire. The first Catholic Chaplain of the British Army in modern times was one of the greatest army chaplains that ever lived. The Glengarry Fencibles, unlike the four or five Regiments which had been previously raised in Scotland and which had mutinied when ordered to England, then endangered by the spread of French Revolutionary principles, were persuaded by their chaplain to volunteer to serve outside of Scotland. This offer was welcomed by the Government, as it served as a precedent for future Fencible regiments. They were accordingly sent in 1795 to Guernsey, and in 1798 to Ireland, to quell the rebellion there. They took part in the Battle of Vinegar Hill and spent the winter under tents in the Wicklow Mountains in pursuit of Dwyer. The chaplain always accompanied his regiment in the field with the view of preventing the men from plundering, and thus constantly exposed his life to danger. On countless occasions he saved the lives of prisoners from the barbarous yeomanry whose outrages had goaded the Catholic peasantry of Wicklow and Wexford into defensive rebellion. The Catholic chapels which the yeomanry had converted into stables, he had restored to their proper religious use. During his four years' campaign in Ireland, when his Highlanders were engaged in stamping out the last vestiges of the Irish rebellion, Chaplain Macdonell not only shared all the privations, hardships and dangers of his soldiers, but managed at the same time to be a ministering angel of peace to his fellow-Catholics and fellow-Gaels—the Men of '98.

A MILITARY EMIGRATION.

During the short Peace of Amiens in 1802 the British Government, singularly misjudging Napoleon and imagining that an era of peace had come, disbanded the Fencible Regiments. The men of Glengarry were once more destitute. Their chaplain again proved himself a resourceful patriot. Emigrate they must; their chaplain determined on a plan of emigration that would be most profitable to the British Empire. The bulk of Scots had hitherto emigrated to the United States. Chaplain Macdonell determined that his men should go to a British Dominion, and chose Upper Canada, where, in the present County of Glengarry, there was already a large settlement of Catholic

Highlanders, chiefly Macdonells of Glengarry, Scotland. The Premier, Mr. Addington, considered that the hold Britain had on Upper Canada was so slender and precarious that he could not be justified in aiding emigration there. This objection the Chaplain answered by proposing a plan for the organization of a Military Emigration, to be composed of the disbanded Scotch Fencible soldiers. This would serve to settle the country with men of sound British traditions and defend it in case of war against the United States. The scheme was on the verge of being put into effect, when Addington had to resign. His successor, Pitt, did not take it up. Years later Bishop Macdonell considered this one of the great lost opportunities of his life. During the war of 1812 the value of these soldier-emigrants would have been inestimable. Had the Government adopted this policy, not only would millions of money have been saved, but Upper Canada would have been enormously strengthened. In 1803 war with France was renewed, and the most vexatious regulations were laid on emigration. Though Chaplain Macdonell had received an order from Premier Addington for a grant of 200 acres for each Highlander that he should bring into Upper Canada, the Chaplain had almost to smuggle his men away, so many were the obstacles, legal and other, which Scottish landlords put in his way. An incident which shows the uncompromising nature of his patriotism occurred when the Colonial Secretary of State, to avoid the charge of aiding emigration urged by the landlords, advised him to conduct his emigrants to Canada via the United States. The British Government in that case would not have to give any land grants, as Upper Canada gave 200 acres of land to any settler coming from the United States. To this Chaplain Macdonell replied that he would not bring his men through the United States, lest in their journey they might become contaminated with the anti-monarchical principles of that country. In 1804, having sent ahead to Canada all the men he could, he himself embarked. He reached York, now Toronto, November 1, of that year.

For the next thirty-five years he was a tower of strength to his God and to his King in Upper Canada. From the Parish of St. Raphael's in the County of Glengarry, which he made his home for the first twenty-five years, he looked after not only the religious interests of the Catholics of Upper Canada, but also the national, educational and even political and economic interests of his fellow-citizens irrespective of race or creed.

To trace his ecclesiastical career is outside the scope of this paper. To do so it would be necessary to trace the ecclesiastical history of Ontario for thirty-five years. I shall confine myself to his work as an imperial and Canadian patriot. No sooner was he in Upper Canada than he saw the military unpreparedness of the Province. While half its settlers were United Empire Loyalists, who were staunch supporters of British institutions, the other half were recent settlers from the United States, who favoured annexation. "The thin red line" which the settlers formed along the St. Lawrence and Lakes Ontario and Erie, from Glengarry to Essex, had many gaps in it and was a poor defence against the powerful American Republic, which was then bitterly anti-English. The ex-military chaplain, with the keen eye of an old campaigner, saw the necessity of a strong defence. Appointed in 1806 Vicar-General of Upper Canada,—with the whole of Upper Canada, except the French parish at Sandwich, to administer without the assistance of a single priest, a state of affairs which lasted for ten years—he became acquainted with every settlement of the Province. On Col. Brock, who that year was appointed the Commandant of the Forces in Canada, he urged the necessity of strengthening the military defence. He proposed to raise a corps of Highland Fencibles in Glengarry, he to act as chaplain. It must be remembered that the men of Glengarry were nearly all soldiers, or sons of soldiers. The first settlement had been by the Macdonells, who had settled in the Mohawk Valley in the present New York State before the Revolutionary War, and who had fought all through that war on Britain's side, being largely responsible for Western Canada being saved to the Empire. The second settlement had come in 1786

directly from Glengarry in Scotland under the leadership of Rev. Roderick Macdonell, who till his death in 1806 tended his fellow-clansmen and countrymen of Stormont County from the Indian mission of St. Regis. The third immigration was that of the Glengarry Fencible veterans under the leadership of their chaplain. No better recruiting ground than the County of Glengarry could then be found in the Empire. Though Brock approved of the formation of a Glengarry Regiment, its necessity was not seen at Downing Street. Vicar-General Macdonell nevertheless continued his efforts, and had this scheme approved in 1808 by Major-General Brock, and by the Governor of Canada, Sir James Craig. There was, however, a delay in carrying out the proposal.

WAR OF 1812.

However, in December, 1811, when war with the United States was seen to be imminent, Vicar-General Macdonell and Captain George Macdonell, the son of a hero of Culloden and the Plains of Abraham, approached Brock, who was now, in addition to being Commander of the Forces, Administrator of Upper Canada. The regiment known as the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles was formed in January, 1812, and Red George Macdonell and the Vicar-General passed the Fiery Cross through Glengarry. So successful was the recruiting that the next month Sir George Prevost, the Governor-General, accepted Brock's proposal to recruit two additional companies, which was accordingly done. The Glengarry Fencibles, some 800 strong, took part in fourteen engagements during the War of 1812. At Queenstown Heights, Ogdensburg, Stony Creek and Lundy's Lane the men of Glengarry shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-Canadians taught the Americans that Canadians were both willing and able to defend their country. If Alexander Macdonell had not become a priest, he would most certainly have become a General. Even as it was, he was one of Brock's most trusty military advisers. For example, in 1812, he urged upon Brock and Prevost the military necessity of a road between Upper and Lower Canada, and in 1813 an Act was passed to open it up, Rev. Alexander Macdonell being one of the road commissioners.

Father Macdonell, or Mr. Macdonell as he was then called, was, it will be remembered, the first modern Catholic chaplain in the British Army. He was ideally fitted for this position. Six feet four in height, of an iron constitution, fearless courage and indomitable will, he was an inspiration to the soldiers. In order to impress by example as well as exhortation on the minds of his flock the necessity of defending this country, he was, during the whole of the War of 1812, constantly on the field participating in the privations and fatigues of the private soldier. At Queenstown Heights he administered the last rites to his nephew, Lieut.-Col. John Macdonell, Attorney-General of Upper Canada, who, after Brock had fallen, led the forces up Queenstown Heights.

AT OGDENSBURG.

Chaplain Macdonell also took part in the Capture of Ogdensburg on 23rd February, 1813—one of the most daring exploits of the war. Red George Macdonell, now a Lieut.-Colonel, was in charge at Prescott of 500 men, 250 regulars and 250 militia, two-thirds of the force being Glengarry Highlanders. On the other side of the St. Lawrence—here a mile and a half wide—was the fortified post of Ogdensburg. Governor Prevost, himself an old soldier, had forbidden the daring Red George to attempt an attack, as the risk was too great. However, his Highland blood was up and he meant to defeat the enemy. Accordingly he rushed his men across the thin ice, which cracked and sprang beneath their feet, dashed up the river bank through the deep snow and after a furious fight captured the fort of Ogdensburg.

Two characteristic stories are told about the Chaplain at Ogdensburg. As the Highlanders marched across the thin ice of the St. Lawrence, relates Sir John A. Macdonald, on one flank was the chaplain with the Cross in his

hand, to urge on his Catholic clansmen, while on the other was a brave Presbyterian minister, Mr. MacKenzie, holding up the Bible as an encouragement to those of his persuasion. One of the chaplain's flock felt somewhat nervous under fire and showed a disposition to fall to the rear: the chaplain ordered him to stand fast; but his orders were disobeyed. As an example became immediately necessary, the Chaplain, who as Vicar-General had extensive powers—there and then excommunicated him. "It would have been better for the man to have faced the Yankees than the wrath of Maighstir Alastair, when, the enemy being in front, his blood was up and the terrors of the Church were at his disposal."

Mr. Kenneth Ross of Lancaster is the authority for the following story about his father and the chaplain: "Ross was wounded in the attack on Ogdensburg and was carried into the house of an innkeeper near Prescott—a half-Yankee like many of his ilk along the border. The chaplain saw that the wounded man was as much in need of stimulants as of priestly counsel, and went at once in search of some brandy. Excuses of various kinds were made by the woman of the house: her husband was absent and had the keys, and so on. The chaplain told her that he would take no denial, and that if she did not procure the brandy at once, he would have it in short order. She still demurred, whereupon he walked to the tap room door and with one kick lifted it off its hinges, and not only Mr. Ross but all others of His Majesty's liege subjects had all the brandy they required after their hard day's fighting." J. A. Macdonell of Alexandria, from whose sketch of the Life of Bishop Macdonell I have taken this and the preceding story, concludes as follows: "Though Mr. Ross was a Presbyterian and the Chaplain a Catholic priest, I doubt if he could have been better served in his extremity by a minister of his own denomination!" I may add, that apart from a study of some of the letters, memoirs and pamphlets of Bishop Macdonell contained in the Canadian Archives, I have derived more information concerning the military career of the Bishop from J. A. Macdonell's sketch than from anything else.

CHURCHMAN AND STATESMAN.

When the War was over and Canada freed from the invader, Vicar-General Macdonell was sent by Mgr. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, to England on an important mission. Quebec Diocese then included the whole of Canada. Bishop Plessis wished to obtain the permission of the British Government to have it divided. He intended among other things to make Father Macdonell Bishop of Upper Canada. Accordingly Father Macdonell went to Europe in 1816, to deal with this and other questions. After several interviews and much correspondence with the Colonial Secretary, Lord Bathurst, and others, he succeeded in getting grants of £100 a year each for three priests and three school masters. His own pension had, in recognition for his services during the War of 1812, been increased from fifty pounds to one hundred pounds. At this time the only schools in Canada, apart from eight district schools chiefly conducted by Church of England clergymen, were taught by American teachers of strong anti-British tendencies. The founding of a system of primary, secondary and University education for the Catholics in Upper Canada was one of the principal endeavours of their pastor. With regard to the formation of a new diocese, as none had been established in the British Empire since the Reformation, Bathurst preferred to have Vicars-General with episcopal powers appointed where needed, rather than have diocesan sees established. Father Macdonell returned to Canada in 1817 with his three priests and three secondary school teachers. On 12th January, 1819, he was appointed Bishop of Resina in partibus infidelium, and Vicar-General of Upper Canada. He was consecrated on December 31st of the following year at the Ursuline Convent, Quebec. The national importance of this episcopal consecration may be estimated from the fact that his episcopal ring was a present from King George IV.

In 1824 affairs of Church and State again called him to England. He endeavoured to get help and priests to start a college at St. Raphael's, Glengarry, sought to direct emigration, and to get the objection to the creation of a see at Kingston removed. To show how successful were his efforts as regards emigration, we have but to take his own account near the end of his life, that from the emigration of his Fencible soldiers in 1802 to that moment, not one Scotch Catholic had emigrated either to the United States or to any other country outside of the British Empire. When it is considered that the majority of Scottish Protestants, and of Irish, both Catholic and Protestant, during this period emigrated to the United States, this is a wonderful record. About this time, that is, 1824, a large emigration began to roll from Ireland to Canada. A cry was raised that the Irish Catholics were disloyal and would not make desirable emigrants. Bishop Macdonell thus vouched for them to Lord Bathurst: "Should my Lord Bathurst be pleased to allow the means of supporting a sufficient number of Catholic clergymen and schoolmasters for Upper Canada, and the selection of them be left to me, I would not hesitate for a moment to become responsible with my life for the general good conduct and loyalty of the Irish Roman Catholics emigrating to Canada." Fifteen years later in Canada during the troublesome times of the rebellion of '37 and '38 the Bishop in a pastoral to his Irish Catholic flock referring to this, said: "Yes, my friends, I pledged my life for your good conduct, and during the fifteen years which have elapsed since that pledge was given, I have had no cause to regret the confidence I placed in your honour and your loyalty." Having paid an ad limina visit to Rome, Bishop Macdonell returned to Canada in 1825. The division of Quebec diocese was finally effected, and in 1826 Bishop Macdonell became Bishop of Kingston. Till his death in 1840, Kingston Diocese embraced the whole of Upper Canada.

In 1831 Bishop Macdonell's services as a patriot and statesman were recognized by the Crown by his being called to the Legislative Council of Upper Canada. He secured grants of land and money for Catholic schools and churches. There was, however, a party of Radicals in Upper Canada, who hated any public grants for denominational purposes, whether Anglican, Presbyterian or Catholic. William Lyon MacKenzie made a bitter attack on Bishop Macdonell, in which he was assisted by an unfrocked priest. The Bishop answered by a magnificent letter to Sir Francis Bond Head. This is such an important historical document that it is well to give it in full. I follow the text of the copy found in the Canadian Archives, M. 845. The Archdeacon of Toronto to whom the Bishop refers in such a fraternal manner, was, of course, the noted Anglican statesman and churchman, Dr. Strachan.

LETTER TO SIR FRANCIS BOND HEAD.

"Kingston, 7th March, 1836.

"Sir,

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication dated the 17th ult. conveying to me extracts from dispatches of Earl Ripon and Lord Glenelg, and of an Address of the House of Assembly of this Province, dated the 15th of last month, to His Excellency Sir Francis Bond Head. The Lieutenant-Governor will, I trust, have the goodness to indulge me with the liberty of making some remarks on a few passages of this extraordinary production of the Honourable the House of Assembly.

"The assertion in the Address that the country has long felt much grieved by observing the appointment of the Chief Justice to a seat in the Speakership in the Legislative Council is wholly groundless and has not the least foundation in truth. No suspicion of partial or impure administration of justice, as regards the present Chief Justice, was ever harboured in any other hearts but in those of the framers of the Address, who form their judgment of the honour and integrity of others from the total absence of these motives in themselves.

Nor was the slightest suspicion of the kind ever expressed by any others but those who had been carefully tutored to echo the clamours of a reckless faction who, finding their wicked attempts to overturn the Government frustrated, have determined by every means in their power to disturb the peace of the Province. In regard to the Archdeacon of Toronto, having myself so seldom the honour of attending the Legislative Council, all I can say is, that I never saw him engaged in any political discussions of any kind, and never heard of his being engaged in political strife, but I have heard of his unwearied attention to his pastoral functions and his charity to the poor and indigent of his own and other persuasions, and I believe that all the respectable characters in the Province will join me in this testimony.

"As to the charges against myself, I feel very little affected by them, having the consolation to think that fifty years spent in the faithful discharge of my duty to God and my country, have established my character upon a foundation too solid to be shaken by the malicious calumnies of two notorious slanderers.

"I must indeed be possessed of more than the common share of vanity, if at the advanced age of seventy-four years, with a worn out constitution and in a very frail state of health, I could encounter the fatigues of a winter journey of 400 miles, through bad roads and bad accommodation, for the honour of sitting for a few days in the Legislative Council, were I sure that the state of my health after such a journey would permit me to enjoy that honour. The very idea is absurd, and only shows the vindictive malice of the two individuals who brought this charge against me, knowing it to be false, and merely to expose my name to public censure and obloquy, having drawn upon myself their mortal hatred by a conscientious discharge of a paramount duty—that of the one, by dismissing him from the sacred ministry on account of scandalous and immoral conduct, that of the other by instilling into the minds of my flock principles of attachment and loyalty to their Sovereign and the Constitution of their Country, thus preventing his mischievous endeavours to alienate their minds from the one and the other by his revolutionary harangues and writings. If this be a crime it is a crime for which I can never expect forgiveness. So far indeed from repenting it, neither racks nor gibbets shall ever deter me from so sacred a duty.

"The next charge against me in the Address is that I neglected my spiritual functions and the care of souls to devote my time and talents to political strife and secular measures. To refute this false charge, it may not be improper to look back to the state of this Province when I arrived in it in 1804. There were then but two Catholic churches and two Catholic clergymen in the whole of Upper Canada. One of these clergymen soon deserted his post, and the other, who resided in the Township of Sandwich in the Western District, never went beyond the limits of his mission, so that upon entering upon my pastoral duty, I had the whole remaining part of the Province to minister to, and without any assistance for a period of ten years. During that period I had to travel over the country from Lake Superior to the Province line of Lower Canada in discharge of my pastoral functions, carrying the sacred vestments, sometimes on horseback, sometimes on my own back, and sometimes in Indian birch canoes, living with savages and without any other shelter or comfort but what their fires and their fares and the branches of trees afforded; and crossing the Great Lakes and even descending the Rapids of the St. Lawrence in their dangerous and wretched crafts. Nor were the hardships and privations which I endured among the new settlers and emigrants less than what I had to encounter among the savages themselves, in their miserable shanties exposed on all sides to the weather and destitute of any comfort. In this way I have been spending my time and my health, year after year, since I have been in Upper Canada, and not clinging to a seat in the Legislative Council or devoting my time to political strife, as my accusers are pleased to assert. The erection of five and thirty Catholic churches and chapels, great and small, although many of them are yet in an unfinished

state, built by my exertions, and the zealous exertions of two and twenty clergymen, the major part of them having been educated at my own expense, afford a substantial proof that I have not neglected my spiritual functions or the care of souls under my charge; and if that be not sufficient I can produce satisfactory documents to prove that I have expended, since I have been in this Province, no less than thirteen thousand pounds of my own private means, besides what I received from other quarters, in the building of churches, chapels, presbyteries and school-houses, in rearing young men for the Church and promoting general education. With a full knowledge of these facts established beyond the possibility of a contradiction, my accusers can have but little regard for truth when they tax me with neglecting my spiritual functions and the care of souls.

"The framers of the Address to His Excellency knew perfectly well that I never held or enjoyed a situation or place of profit or emolument, except the salary which my Sovereign was graciously pleased to bestow upon me in reward for forty years' faithful services to my country. Having been instrumental in getting two corps of my flock raised and embodied in defence of their country in critical times, viz., the First Glengarry Fencible Regiment was raised by my influence as a Catholic corps during the Irish rebellion, whose dangers and fatigues I shared in that distracted country, and contributed in no small degree to repress the rapacity of the soldiery and bring back the deluded people to a sense of their duty to their Sovereign and submission to the laws. Ample and honourable testimonials of their services and my conduct may be found in the Government office at Toronto. The Second Glengarry Fencible Regiment, raised in this Province when the Government of the United States invaded and expected to make a conquest of Canada, was planned by me and partly raised by my influence. My zeal in the service of my country and my exertion in the defence of this Province were acknowledged by his late Majesty through Earl Bathurst, then Secretary of State for the Colonies. My salary was then increased and a seat was assigned me in the Legislative Council as a distinguished mark of my Sovereign's favour, an honour that I should consider it a disgrace to resign, although I can hardly expect ever to sit in the Council, nor do I believe that Lord Glenelg, who knows something of me, would expect that I should show so much imbecility in my latter days as to relinquish a mark of honour, conferred on me by my Sovereign, to gratify the vindictive malice of a few unprincipled Radicals. So far, however, from repining at the cruel and continued persecution of my enemies, I pray God to give me patience to suffer for justice' sake, and to forgive them their unjust and unmerited conduct towards me.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient and very humble servant,

"ALEXR. MACDONELL."

I. Joseph, Esq.,

Secretary to His Excellency,

Sir Francis Bond Head, etc., etc., etc.

REBELLION OF '37.

Things were now rapidly heading for a crisis in Upper Canada; Mackenzie, impatient at what he considered the ineffectual results of constitutional agitation, was determining upon a revolution. Bishop Macdonell's services were again at the disposal of his country. He considered the election of 1836 an open fight between the Revolutionary Radicals and the Constitutional Party. He published a strong address to the Catholic and Protestant electors of Stormont and Glengarry, urging them to support the Government. In this important election the Catholic vote went solidly against McKenzie, whose party

was defeated. So delighted were the Protestant Conservatives with the Bishop's attitude that the Orange Body of the City of Toronto presented Bishop Macdonell with an address for his loyalty and liberality. The Bishop answered by saying that Orangemen and Catholics should stand shoulder to shoulder in the defence of the Constitution. In his address to the Electors of Stormont and Glengarry the Bishop had thus described his relations with his Protestant fellow-citizens:

"I address my Protestant as well as my Catholic friends because I feel assured that during the long period of four and forty years that my intercourse with some of you, and two and thirty years with others, has subsisted, no man will say in promoting your temporal interest I ever made any difference between Catholic and Protestant; and indeed I have found Protestants upon all occasions as ready to meet my wishes and second my efforts to promote the public good as the Catholics themselves; and it is with no small gratification that I here acknowledge having received from Orangemen unequivocal and substantial proofs of disinterested friendship and generosity of heart."

During 1837 and 1838 the Bishop was much concerned at the military unpreparedness of the country. He saw that Sir Francis Bond Head's military blunders might easily be fatal. He again proposed the formation of a Fencible Corps in Glengarry which would, with other regular troops, defend both Upper and Lower Canada from internal and external foes. Next year he pointed out that if these Highlanders had been sent to Lower Canada in 1837 as they volunteered to go, there would have been no rebellion there the following year. The military inefficiency of the superannuated colonels of militia and the hesitation and indecision of magistrates caused much anxiety. Canada was in the gravest of perils, and the military officials were singularly careless. On the 20th February, 1838, the Bishop wrote from Kingston to a Mr. Manahan, M.P.P., saying that the Yankees had 5,000 men mustered in St. John's Island on the way to attack Kingston probably that very night. "We have only 160 militia men to oppose this force. We might have had 2,000 had not Sir Francis and yourself robbed the town of the arms that were deposited in it for its defence. Had Kingston been allowed to remain in the state it was left after the last war, it would have bidden defiance to all the power of the State of New York, and proved an impregnable bulwark to Upper Canada." Unfortunately, the Home Government, deceived by interested persons in Toronto, had caused Kingston to be dismantled, and the noble navy yard to be completely annihilated, and the immense naval stores to be sold for a mere nothing. One ship of 160 guns, which had cost about half a million of money, was sold for \$100. Then, again, the Duke of Wellington had set aside £70,000 to build a fort at Kingston, but after a long delay only a small confined fort capable of containing 300 men was built. "Our rulers," concluded the Bishop, "have much to answer for!" However, the rebels and their Yankee recruits did not succeed in crossing the St. Lawrence. Meanwhile Bishop Macdonell was stirring up the people. He delivered, 1st November, 1838, a warlike address to the men of Glengarry who had in great numbers responded to the call to arms, and a month later an address to the Irish Catholics of Upper Canada, telling them to stand by the Constitution. And so they did. As a proof that Bishop Macdonell was considered a tower of strength to the Constitution in Canada, Major-General Sir George Arthur, who in 1838 was in charge of Upper Canada, specially requested him to delay his proposed trip to Europe, as his services were so valuable at home. To this same General he wrote: "Should your Excellency determine to raise a corps of Irish Roman Catholics under the command of Colonel Baldwin of the Gore, Toronto, I would pledge my life that your Excellency cannot muster a more loyal, more gallant or a more efficient corps in this or any other Province, and old and stiff as I am, I am willing and ready to go to Toronto to attend them if they require my presence." To Lord Durham he was able to report that "all the Irish

Catholics and the whole of the Scotch Highlanders have given the most unequivocal proofs of their loyalty and attachment to the British Constitution by rushing to arms at the first call of the Government."

The fact that some of the Catholic French Canadians of Lower Canada rebelled was a deep humiliation for him. He lays the guilt, however, at the right door. "The most inexcusable part, however, of the conduct of the Canadians was not to listen to the advise of their clergy, who knew well that the intention of Papineau and his associates was to destroy their influence and extinguish the Catholic religion, which he (Papineau) publicly declared to be absolutely necessary, before liberty could be established in Lower Canada." Bishop Macdonell admitted that there were political grievances, but he very rightly insisted upon remedying them by constitutional means.

When the storm had spent itself, and Canada no longer feared domestic or foreign foes, Bishop Macdonell decided to make a last visit to Great Britain. Now, as during his whole life, his mission was a two-fold one; one which concerned his church, getting funds for Regiopolis College, which he had just established—and one which concerned his country, namely, directing emigration from Ireland and Scotland. Though he was in feeble health, he determined to go. He interviewed the British Government in London in 1839, but before he could finish his work with the Irish and Scottish Bishops, he took a cold of which he died January 14, 1840, at Dumfries, Scotland. He was then seventy-eight years of age. He died as he had lived, for God and country.

Bishop Macdonell, though he fortunately left a vast number of letters, published scarcely anything. In 1833, however, he wrote for the Canadian Literary Magazine an article tracing his history from the day that he and his men left the Highlands in 1792 till they arrived in Upper Canada twelve years later. In 1839, when the Bishop had left for England, there was published at Kingston a booklet of 54 pages, entitled "A Short Account of the Emigration from the Highlands of Scotland to North America and the Establishment of the Catholic Diocese of Upper Canada." This, which also exists in a slightly different form in manuscript, was written by the Bishop. The appendix of this book contains some addresses and memorials of the Bishop dealing with the Rebellion of '37 and the foundation of Regiopolis. The little book, which is in the Canadian Archives, should be reprinted. It is now so rare that there is not even a copy of it in the Library of Parliament.

LACKS A BIOGRAPHER.

It is a pity that two brief booklets—one by the late Chevalier Macdonell, and one by J. A. Macdonell, K.C., of Alexandria—represent the only attempts made to write the biography of a man who played such an important role in the history of Canada and the British Empire as Bishop Macdonell. Copies of his letters lie on the shelves of the Canadian Archives at Ottawa awaiting an editor to introduce them to the reading public. The history of Upper Canada and the history of Canada's relation to the Empire cannot be written until this is done. Perhaps these words may induce some careful historian to make known to the world Canada's greatest Chaplain, Alexander Macdonell, Bishop and Patriot.

JOHN J. O'GORMAN.

Ottawa, 21 December, 1915.

X See Canadian Pamphlets 1004 in
Parliamentary Library — "A Retrospect"