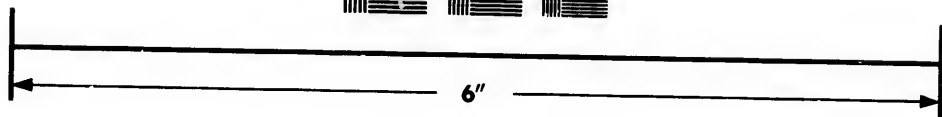
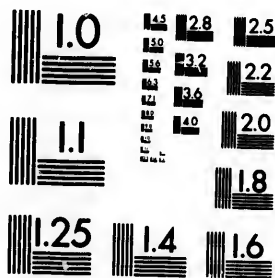


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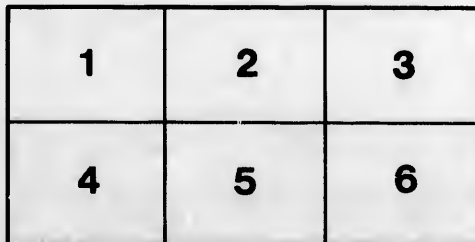
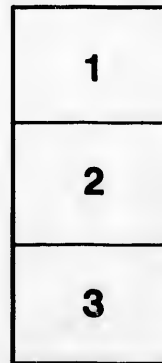
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SOME REMARKS
UPON
SIR CHARLES BAGOT'S
CANADIAN GOVERNMENT.

BY THE REVEREND DR. RYERSON,
OF VICTORIA COLLEGE, COBOURG.

Kingston:
PRINTED BY DESBARATS & DERBISHIRE.

1843.

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THE following notice and observations appeared originally in the columns of the Kingston Chronicle as a letter to the Editor. For the greater convenience of perusal, and in compliance with the wish of several admirers of the sentiments and composition, they have been printed in their present form, permission having been first obtained from the Reverend author, who is not otherwise, excepting only by this consent, connected with the present publication.

NOTICE.

THE views expressed in the following article, which was written better than a fortnight since, have been recently sanctioned by the highest authorities—LORD STANLEY and SIR CHARLES METCALFE. In a late Speech in the House of Commons, LORD STANLEY stated that the acts of SIR CHARLES BAGOT were in unison with, and in conformity to the instructions he had received from Her Majesty's Government. In SIR CHARLES METCALFE'S replies to the inhabitants of the Gore, Talbot, and Wellington Districts, His Excellency "deprecates that spirit which leads to reproachful and other unjust imputations against our fellow countrymen, whom we are in duty bound to love and to cherish;" expresses his "anxious desire that all parties would forget and forgive past injuries and offences,"—that "they would lay aside their dissensions, and unite with heart and hand to advance the prosperity and happiness of the community," and that he "looks with hope to the united efforts of all classes of the community acting in harmony, as the surest foundation for general prosperity and happiness."

These authoritative declarations were unknown to me when I wrote the following article. It is therefore no small satisfaction to learn, that what I had conceived and endeavoured to illustrate as adapted to the best interests of the United Province, may not merely be stated in reference to the administration of Sir Charles Bagot, but may be regarded as the settled and avowed policy of Her Majesty's Government and Her Majesty's Representative in Canada.

As the subject of which I have briefly written, belongs not to a party, but relates to *Canada*, I deem no apology necessary for me, (who advocate the supremacy of no party, but the interests of all,) in attempting to supply a *desideratum* which I have not seen supplied from any other quarter. As a Minister and Member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, I feel grateful to Sir Charles Bagot; and for both his private virtues and public acts, I believe he has a claim to the grateful remembrance of United Canada.

VICTORIA COLLEGE, MAY 15, 1843.

POSTSCRIPT.—SIR CHARLES BAGOT, unhappily expired at 3 o'clock on the morning of the 19th May, whilst these observations in their present form were passing through the Press.

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SIR CHARLES BAGOT AND HIS CANADIAN GOVERNMENT.

On the appointment of a new Governor General of Canada, the administration of His Excellency Sir Charles Bagot becomes a subject of history ; and as such it deserves a respectful notice, whether we consider the nature of the policy involved, the interests affected, or the rank and character of the illustrious Statesman, who, like his noble predecessor, seems destined, by a mysterious Providence, to close his earthly career with his Canadian Government. I ventured to offer an humble tribute of respect and gratitude to the memory of Lord Sydenham on his premature removal : similar feelings prompt me to offer a similar tribute to Sir Charles Bagot on his premature departure.

The work of each was *sui generis* : each has been compelled to retire before completing it ; but each has done enough to enhance his own previously high reputation, and secure the grateful remembrance of Canada.

Lord Sydenham had a Constitution of Government to establish : Sir Charles Bagot had a system of Government to work. Lord Sydenham had two Provinces to unite : Sir Charles Bagot had two Provinces to cement. The former had an administration to create : the latter had an administration to establish. The one had to inspire the country with hope and confidence : the other had to inspire it with charity and enterprise. Lord Sydenham fell amidst the regrets of the people of *Upper* Canada : Sir Charles Bagot retires amidst the sympathies and blessings of the people of *United* Canada. The one was admired as a Statesman : the other is esteemed as a Father.

What Lord Sydenham did for Canada has long since been recorded : what Sir Charles Bagot has done for Canada remains to be told —though posterity alone can estimate it.

Sir Charles Bagot has *created* throughout the length and breadth of *United* Canada the settled and delightful conviction, that its government is henceforth to be *British* as well as Colonial,—and as such, the best on the Continent of America ; that Canadians are to be governed upon the principles of domestic, and not of trans-atlantic policy ; that they are not to be minified as men and citizens, because they are colonists : that they are (to use the golden words of Sir Robert Peel) “ to be treated as an *integral portion* of the British Empire.” This

has often been avowed from the highest quarters in Canada: Sir Charles Bagot has *illustrated* it, and established the universal *belief* of it. The proof of this assertion is found in the entire absence throughout the press of Canada, of any allusion to the governments of a neighbouring Republic, except to evince our own more favoured and happy condition. This single fact, so amazing to any one who possesses the requisite information to contrast the former and present spirit of a large portion of the Canadian press—indicates in language as conclusive as it is gratifying, all the differences between a settled and an unsettled state of things—between a strong and a weak Government—between a discontented and a happy people.

Sir Charles Bagot has also, by his appointments to office, and general policy, furnished practical proof that a difference of *religious* opinion in Canada is no longer to be made the execrable ground of political proscription, and the fruitful source of civil discord. While a *section* of not the most numerous sect arrogantly and schismatically avow *exclusive* claim to the name and attributes of Christian Church and loyal faith, and deal out both religious and civil anathemas against their more numerous, and, in many instances, more intelligent and virtuous fellow Christians and subjects, the policy of Sir Charles Bagot, in trampling down the selfish arrogance of the sectary, and embracing virtue and merit under every form of religious faith, exhibits the morning splendour of a brighter day for Canada, when “Ephraim may no longer envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim;” when the very variety of form—as in the works of nature—may evince the more clearly the essential unity of essence and the community of origin and destination. Thus by conferring a common protection and privilege, to make the Throne the centre of attraction to the affections and interests of every form of faith, claiming origin in the Bible, and to place the strength of the government in the affectionate attachment of a united people rather than in the bayonets of an armed soldiery, is the noblest work of both charity and patriotism. No one can contemplate the calamitous past without sympathizing with the sentiment of the Poet,—

———“*En quo discordia cives
Perduxit miseros!*”

Whilst none can survey the present aspect of our civil and social relations, and especially under the auspicious advent of a second Pollio, without exclaiming with the same Poet,—

———“*Incipiunt magni procedere menses;
Te duce, si qua manet sceleris vestigia nostri,
Irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.*”

But that which, as it appears to me, will invest the name of Sir Charles Bagot with the brightest halo of glory, and render his administration the greatest benefit to Canada, is the very point on which he has been most assailed—namely, his effacing the lines of former party de-

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marcation, his countenance to classes of the community, and selection of individuals for civil employments, upon the ground of personal qualification and public influence, without reference to former party associations or political predilections.

It has been alleged that Sir Charles Bagot has encouraged and promoted the disaffected and the disloyal—a charge which, as may be easily shown, involves a fallacy in argument, if not falsehood in fact. The proof of the allegation is laid in transactions which took place (to give the longest period) between the years 1830 and 1840. Were all that has been stated, with every real or imaginary aggravation, correct, it would amount to no proof in the present instance. The general application made of such statements, involves a sophism termed by the Schoolmen—a *dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*—maintaining that what may have been true in certain circumstances, is true absolutely and under all circumstances—arguing that because the inhabitants of Great Britain have at different times shown themselves disaffected to partial and despotic government, they are therefore disaffected to monarchical government of every kind. To render the proof satisfactory and complete in the present case, it must be shown that the same system of government existed in Upper and Lower Canada from 1830 to 1840, which has obtained in *United* Canada since the latter period. If sections of the inhabitants of either or both Provinces have manifested disaffection to a former system of government, the Imperial Parliament has participated in that disaffection by repealing the old system of government and establishing a new one, as different from the old as was the British Constitution after the revolution of 1688, administered according to the “Bill of Rights,” by William and Mary, from what it had been under the *regime* of the Tudors and Stuarts. The bitter arrows therefore, which have been aimed at Sir Charles Bagot and portions of the Canadian people, bound with equal force from the immediate objects of attack against Her Majesty and the Imperial Parliament. If the old systems of Canadian Government have been abolished by the supreme authorities of the Empire, the party distinctions and organizations engendered under them ought, of course, to be abandoned—which was indeed one essential object in the establishment of the new system. No man, therefore, whom the law protects ought to be judged by what may have been his views and conduct in respect to an abrogated system of government, but by his views and conduct in respect to the present established system. Surely no man in Canada ought to be condemned and proscribed for a dislike to what has been abolished, and therefore practically condemned by Her Majesty and the Imperial Parliament. The discrimination of Sir Charles Bagot in these things which so widely differ, and his moral courage, and generous humanity, and British Statesmanship, in acting upon that discrimination, present him in advantageous contrast with his impugnors, and suggest to the reflecting mind

the *germ* and *fountain* of inestimable blessings which are yet to adorn and enrich the *social system* of Canada.

But were the case less clear—were the Canadas under the same Constitution of Government now as in former years, and also under the same system of administration—were the only difference in the former and present state of things a difference in the *strength* of the Government and in the *weakness* of its enemies, arising from the past complete triumph of the former and the complete defeat of the latter, and an amazing revolution of feeling in the great body of the community, and admitting the truth of what has been alleged against individuals and parties; still the course of Sir Charles Bagot's short administration would, I am persuaded, be equally the dictates of a sound policy and noble generosity. The present argumentation of this question in the abstract is, I am aware, prohibited by the blindness of passion, and the obliquity of prejudice, and the selfishness of party; but even when abstract reason and truth will not convince the illustrations and analogies of history may impress.

How did the famous Spartan Legislator treat that portion of his wealthy fellow citizens who had been disaffected to his system of government? On their submission the remembrance of their previous disaffection was obliterated, and even Alcander who, in the paroxism of rebellion, had put out the eye of Lycurgus, was forgiven, received into the household of the illustrious statesman whom he had maimed, and by kindness was converted from a dangerous enemy into a faithful friend and useful servant. Can that which all ages have proclaimed as the highest glory of Lycurgus, be the deepest reproach of Sir Charles Bagot?

After Attica had been desolated during a long period of anarchy and civil war, what was the policy of the immortal Thrasybulus, on his triumph over his enemies, and re-establishment of the ancient form of the government? Did Thrasybulus pursue the policy which has been strenuously urged upon Sir Charles Bagot? Nay, as Rollin says, "Thrasybulus rising above those resentments from the superiority of his more extensive genius, and the views of a more discerning and profound policy, foresaw that by acquiescing in the punishment of the guilty, eternal seeds of discord and enmity would remain, to weaken by domestic divisions the strength of a republic which it was necessary to unite against the common enemy, and occasion the loss to the state of a great number of citizens, who might render it important services with the very view of making amends for past behaviour. Such conduct after great troubles in a state has always seemed to the ablest politicians the most certain and ready means to restore the public peace and tranquillity." Thrasybulus recalled the exiles, and at the same time proposed the celebrated amnesty by which the citizens *engaged upon oath that all past transactions should be buried in oblivion*. "This," says the eloquent

historian, "is one of the finest events in ancient history, worthy of the Athenian lenity and benevolence, and has served as a model to successive ages in good governments."

No doubt many a resentful and aspiring Athenian objected to the policy of Thrasybulus in thus treating alike the friends and enemies of the ancient Government: but history has long since placed it amongst the most perfect specimens of masterly statesmanship, and refined humanity. Thrasybulus required by *oath*, what Sir Charles Bagot has often recommended as a duty; and those who admire the conduct of the former, ought to respect that of the latter.

Judicious historians record as almost the only redeeming feature of the reign of the feeble and indolent *Claudius*, that he passed an act of oblivion for all former offences against the state, and exhibited for a time a disposition to govern impartially; and for no part of his administration has the able and amiable *Vespasian* been more honoured than for his giving a general pardon to all who had been found in arms against him—in allowing every citizen access to his person in order to state his grievances—and in declaring, as TYTLER says, "war against that vile race of pensioned informers, which had multiplied so exceedingly during the preceding reigns." Julius Cæsar's celebrity as a general and a conqueror over armies and provinces, is surpassed by his conquest over his own personal resentments and party feelings (after having grown up and lived amidst all the asperities of both)—when he "*pardoned all who had carried arms against him, made no distinctions with regard to parties,*" and avowed in one of his speeches, "I will not renew the massacres of Sylla and Marius, the very remembrance of which is shocking to me. Now that my enemies are subdued, I will lay aside the sword, and *endeavour by my good offices, to gain over those who continue to hate me.*"

Such an example may, with personal honor and and public advantage be imitated by every philanthropist and Christian in Canada, as it has been by Sir Charles Bagot.

If we turn from Roman to English History, we meet with examples, even during its less enlightened periods, which ought to silence and shame the proscribing spirit of our times.

The Earl of Pembroke, who, during the minority of Henry III. (1217) was protector of the Kingdom, is admitted to have been the ablest statesman and general of his age. Yet, after suppressing a rebellion which had commenced during the latter part of the reign of King JOHN, that distinguished nobleman (to use the words of Hume)—"*received the rebellious barons into favour; restored them to their possessions: and endeavoured by an equal behaviour, to bury all past animosities.*" Of the illustrious Edward I. who had extinguished a

most formidable rebellion, headed by Leicester, at the famous battle of Evesham, (1266), the following facts are related by Hume ;

“Adam de Gourdon, a courageous baron, maintained himself during some time in the forests of Hampshire, *committed depredations in the neighbourhood*, and obliged the Prince to lead out a body of troops in that country against him. Edward attacked the camp of the rebels ; and being transported by the ardour of battle leaped over the fence with a few followers and encountered Gourdon in single combat. The victory was long disputed by the valiant combatants ; but ended at last in the Prince’s favour, who wounded his antagonist, threw him from his horse, and took him prisoner. He not only *gave him his life, but introduced him that very night to the Queen, procured him his pardon, received him into his favour, and was ever after faithfully served by him.*”

It was by the career of half a century thus commenced, and by a course of legislation and government harmonizing with such acts, that has obtained for Edward, both from Historians and Statesmen, the appellation of the “English Justinian.” How can an act that ennobles the name of Edward I., be disreputable in Sir Charles Bagot ?

It is known that Henry V.,—the most heroic monarch in English History—found the Kingdom convulsed by the contests which had been commenced by his Father, Henry IV., between the houses of York and Lancaster—to the latter of which Henry himself belonged. Yet, says Hume,—“*The King seemed ambitious to bury all party distinctions in oblivion ; the instruments of the preceding reign, who had been advanced for their blind zeal for the Lancastrian interests, more than from their merits, gave place every where to men of more honourable character ; virtue seemed now to have an open career, in which it might exert itself ; the exhortations as well as example of the Prince, gave it encouragement ; and all men were unanimous in their attachment to Henry.*” How much more honourable to Henry, and beneficial to the nation was such a policy, than the partial and proscriptive policy which has been pressed upon Sir Charles Bagot, and than the party policy which characterized the otherwise most useful reign of Henry VII., of the same House with Henry V. After referring to the union of the two Houses by the marriage of Henry VII. with Elizabeth, heir of the House of York, Hume says—“Instead of embracing the present happy opportunity of abolishing these fatal distinctions, of uniting his title with that of his consort, and of bestowing favour indiscriminately on the friends of both families, he carried to the throne all the partialities which belong to the head of a faction, and even the passions which are carefully guarded against by every true politician in that situation. To exalt the Lancastrian party, to depress the adherents of the House of

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York, were still the favourite objects of his pursuit; and through the whole course of his reign, he never forgot his early prepossessions."

It will be a dark day for United Canada, should its Governor become "the head of a faction," and not of the moderator of factions; but Sir Charles Bagot, disregarding the littleness of party faction, and acting upon the maxim which even Buonaparte had the discrimination and wisdom to adopt—"tell me not what a man *was*, but what he *is now*,"—has pursued a course which has added brilliancy to the noblest acts of the most renowned Statesmen of Greece and Rome and England; a course the recollection of which no doubt sweetens his hours of retirement and suffering, and will embalm his name in the grateful remembrance of Canada when the tongue of calumny shall have been silenced, and the breath of faction shall have been extinguished, amid the gratulations of a united and happy people.

Cicero has compared the Statesman to a Pilot, whose art consists in managing every turn of the winds, and applying even the most perverse to the progress of his voyage. Thus did Sir Charles Bagot—when he failed (in consequence, as it appears to me, of their own prejudices and resentments) to connect with his administration a now hostile party in Upper Canada, he made it the occasion of attaching to his Government the entire French population of the Lower Province—a measure which all preceding Governors had failed to accomplish, which at once rendered the reduction of the Military Force in this Country safe and expedient, and which has made his Government, by the moral power of its identity with the mass of the people, the strongest that ever existed in Canada.

Whilst it has been theoretically admitted upon all sides, that our French fellow subjects are fairly entitled to a representation in the Councils of the Sovereign, as well as of the people, Sir Charles Bagot has been assailed with unwonted bitterness for the selections which he has made—charge as consistent and as rational as it would be to admit the right of the People of Great Britain to a representation in the Executive Councils of the nation, and then denounce Her Majesty for selecting such men as a Peel and a Wellington; since the same British principles of state policy, and the same means of information which suggested to Her Majesty, Sir Robert Peel, and the Duke of Wellington, as the most influential and appropriate advisers of the Crown in behalf of the people of Great Britain, suggested to Sir Charles Bagot certain individuals whom he has selected as the most influential and appropriate advisers of the Crown in behalf of the French People of Canada; a measure so just, so wise, so expedient, as to induce the Hon. Mr. DRAPER, not only to advise it, but to regard his own retirement from the power and emoluments of office as not too great a sacrifice for its

accomplishment—thereby furnishing a noble example of genuine patriotism and the highest possible encomium on Sir Charles Bagot's policy.

It was the *Legislative* measures that Lord Sydenham introduced and accomplished, which invested his administration with the most thrilling interest and imposing splendour. Sir Charles Bagot has been denied the privilege of introducing to the Legislature the measures, which, with the aid of his advisers, he had contemplated and prepared for the good government and welfare of the Province. What he has done in the ordinary exercise of the Executive functions, and the deep interest he has manifested in bringing the University of King's College into early and efficient operation, and in encouraging and supporting other educational Institutions, indicate how much he would have done as a *Legislator*, had opportunity been allowed him. Of the merits of rival parties in Canada it is not my province to speak : but of Sir Charles Bagot during his short Canadian administration, I may say what a celebrated historian has said of Scipio—

Nil non laudandum aut dixit, aut fecit, aut sensit.

If any one circumstance, in addition to the consciousness of having done his duty, and the expressions of gratitude and sympathy which greet him from every part of the Province, can alleviate the sufferings of Sir Charles Bagot and the disappointment of so premature a retirement from office, it must be the respectful and affectionate references which are daily made to him by his distinguished successor, SIR CHARLES METCALFE. Indeed it is a spectacle of moral sublimity delightful and affecting to the whole Country, to see two such Statesmen, free from every feeling of personal jealousy, almost emulate each other in expressions of confidence and hope on the one side, and of praise and sympathy on the other. Were their spirit imbibed and their example imitated by the entire population of Canada, how soon would the fulminations of bigotry and the criminations of party cease throughout the land, and be succeeded by the purer language of Christian charity, and the nobler acts of public patriotism.

While in the new Governor General I doubt not the people of the united Province will find all that we have lost in his predecessor—a Father, a Friend, and a Benefactor,—I should have done violence to my own feelings, not to offer to the departing Sir Charles Bagot, this sincere, though feeble tribute of respect and gratitude for the impartiality, wisdom and excellence of his administration, and without adding, what I believe to be, the prayer of United Canada,—May Jehovah-shammah be with him ; may Jehovah-nisi defend him ; may Jehovah-jireh provide for him ; may Jehovah-shalom send him peace !

EGERTON RYERSON.

VICTORIA COLLEGE,
May 1, 1843.

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