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# THE FREE PRESS.

VOL. I] MONTREAL, THURSDAY, 8th MAY, 1823. [No 38. 29

*Condo et compono quæ mox depromere possim.* HORACE.

Collecting and composing what from time to time may be produced.

## ABSTRACT OF DEBATES IN UPPER CANADA, continued.

Mr. John Wilson, who rose again, after the speaker, in the course of his further observations, judiciously said, in reply to the opinion expressed that the French Canadians would be gradually melted down, and in a few generations reduced to one language; that "such a case stood without precedent in the annals of mankind, since different languages and customs had existence upon the earth. Nothing but extermination could change the language and customs of a numerous and dense population, or transplanting and thinly interspersing them among another people; but this was not the age, neither was England the nation, for the former, nor yet for the latter without the consent of each individual.\* But a numerous people could not

\*It is not, however, seventy years ago, since a similar savage policy was adopted, and by England too, and upon French colonists, near neighbours, relations, and connections, and in the same situation as the Canadians were, before they obtained their constitutional act. The case of the French neutrals, of Nova Scotia, has been generally sturred over by our historians: but it is remembered, both by the old Canadians, and by the children of the Acadian exiles, dispersed through the United States. They were the descendants of those French inhabitants of Nova Scotia, who, after the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, by which the province was ceded to England, were permitted to hold their lands on condition of making a declaration of allegiance to their new sovereign, which was accompanied by the express stipulation that they were not to be required to bear arms either against their Indian neighbours, or transatlantic countrymen. This contract was revived at several subsequent periods; and such was its notoriety, that for half a century they bore the name, and maintained the character, of neutrals. The character of this race was mild, frugal, industrious, and pious, and a scrupulous sense of the indissoluble nature of their ancient obligation to their King, was the great cause of their mis-

nor would not, thus be melted down, mixed and amalgamated." Instancing several historical examples, he added that he could not see what benefits were expected to be derived by Upper Canada, or by England, by effecting so great a change in the French Canadians as that contemplated by some gentlemen. It

fortune. A few of them had indeed joined the French forces at Louisburg; but the body of the people were only suspected of an inclination to assist the enemies of England; an accusation which they, however, most solemnly deny, in their pathetic petition to His Majesty, preserved in Walsh's appeal; (note F,) yet extirpation and transportation were the means adopted for destroying the suspected infidelity of these poor neutrals. "General Lawrence," says Entyck, "did not only pursue these dangerous inhabitants with fire and sword, laying their country waste, burning their dwellings, and carrying off their stock; but he thought it expedient to transport the French neutrals, so as to entirely extirpate a people that only waited an opportunity to join the enemy." And this was whilst they were in the King's peace, having actually taken the qualified oath of allegiance, which the compact of their cession required. But it was not the act of general Lawrence alone, it was in consequence of instructions from home, and after it had been considered by the governor and council of Nova Scotia, in conjunction with admirals Boscawen and Mordaunt. From their relative local situation, it was obvious that, if they were merely turned out of the country, and left to go where they pleased, they would have recruited the then French province of Canada with soldiers, who would immediately have returned in arms upon the British frontiers. It was therefore determined to remove and disperse the whole people, in number upwards of ten thousand, among the other British colonies, where they could be amalgamated with the other colonists. They were kept entirely ignorant of their destiny, until the moment of their captivity, and were assured, or overawed, to galley in their harvest, which they were obliged to leave behind them. That convenient moment being arrived they were called together at the different posts to hear the King's orders, as they were termed. By those orders it was declared that their lands and tenements, cattle, stock and effects, save only money and household goods, were forfeited to the crown, themselves to be removed from the province, and until then declared the King's prisoners. As some of the wretched inhabitants escaped to the woods, all possible measures were adopted to force them back into captivity. The country was laid waste to prevent their subsistence. In the district of Minas alone, 255 houses 11 mills and one church were destroyed. About seven thousand of them, being embarked at the point of the bayonet, were dispersed among the other

could not make them more virtuous or enlightened than they are at present: neither would it make them more attached to the British government, and were we to perplex ourselves and lose our liberty in the endeavour to attain an uncertain good that lay in the bosom of futurity, and might never be realized.

colonies, in 1755; and in 1762, upon an alarm occasioned by the landing of the French in Newfoundland, about two thousand more shared the same fate. The quota destined for Pennsylvania, Eulick says, "was 415 men, women, and children. They landed in a most deplorable condition at Philadelphia. The government, to get clear of the charge such a company of miserable wretches would require to maintain them, proposed to sell them with their own consent: but when this expedient for their support was offered for their consideration, the transports refused it with indignation, alleging that they were prisoners, and expected to be maintained as such, and not forced to labour. They further said that they had not violated their oath of fidelity, which, by the treaty of Utrecht, they were obliged to take; and that they were ready to renew that oath, but that a new oath of obedience having been prescribed to them, by which they apprehended the neutrals would be obliged to bear arms against the French, they could not take it, and thought they could not be compelled to take it." No proof has ever been produced—none exists—to support the accusations against these sufferers; and no justification, but state necessity, and policy for securing the dominion of the territory, they were ordered from, has ever been offered. Tradition is fresh and positive, in the various parts of the United States, where they became located, respecting their guileless, peaceable and scrupulous character: and their petition, before alluded to, bears intrinsic evidence of the truth of its details. "We trust, say they, "that your Majesty will not suffer suspicions and accusations to be received as proofs sufficient to reduce thousands of innocent people from the most happy situation to a state of the greatest distress and misery. We have always desired and again desire, that we may be permitted to answer our accusers in a judicial way. In the mean time, permit us, sir, here solemnly to declare, that these accusations are utterly false and groundless, so far as they concern us as a collective body of people. And what was one of the hardest and greatest aggravations appears, where they represent that not long before our being made prisoners, the house in which we kept our contracts, records, deeds, &c. was invested by an armed force, and all our papers violently carried away, none of which have to this day been returned us, whereby we are in a great measure deprived of the means of making our innocency, and the justness of our complaints appear in their true light." Nothing in fact can be more

"It was said we had the St. Lawrence for a common outlet, and that we could not exist without being one people. Look at the large rivers that penetrated far into the interior of several continents of the universe. Were they inhabited throughout by the same people? The Danube, the Rhine, and the Nile, had different nations with their separate governments, inhabiting their borders. Do they not form combinations to preserve each from the attacks of the others? and will it not be the particular interest of Lower-Canada to treat us well that they may increase their wealth by our trade, especially as we can turn our attention to another market?"

detestably oppressive than to seize and embezzle papers; lot, by garbling, altering, selecting, and destroying, such as may or might serve particular purposes, it is easy, in such cases to make the "worse appear the better cause." After detailing the mode in which they were made prisoners, "Thus, notwithstanding the solemn grants made to our fathers, and the declarations made in your Majesty's name, that it was your Majesty's resolution to protect and maintain all such of us as should continue in their duty and allegiance to your Majesty, in the quiet and peaceable possession of their settlements, and the enjoyment of all their rights and privileges, as your Majesty's subjects; we found ourselves at once, deprived of our rights and liberties, without any judicial process, or even without any accusers appearing against us, and this solely grounded on mistaken jealousies, and false suspicions that we were inclinable to take part with your Majesty's enemies." The picture they draw of the unfeeling mode in which they were transported far from their homes, is affecting. "This was done in so much haste, and with so little regard to our necessities and to the tenderest ties of nature that, from the most social enjoyments, and affluent circumstances, many found themselves destitute of the necessaries of life. Parents were separated from children, and husbands from wives, some of whom have not to this day met again; and we were so crowded in the transport-vessels that we had not room even for all our bodies to lie down at once, and consequently were prevented from carrying with us proper necessaries, especially for the support and comfort of the aged and weak, many of whom quickly ended their misery with their lives." This is but a short specimen of their complaints. to which, I am grieved, for the honour of my country, to have to add, that not the least attention was paid.

Altho' a good deal irrelevant to the matter on hand, I have given these particulars chiefly as a matter of record, and to preserve some historical details that are not at all known, or have been varnished over, or slightly mentioned by the annalists of those times: and in order that they may be a beacon for

It was about this period of the debate, that the question appears to have been first started, as to the incompetency of the House to declare an opinion on the subject of the union; one certainly, that, notwithstanding the high estimation in which I hold the talents, and principles of Mr. Wilson and others who proposed, and finally carried, that negative declaration, I can not but consider as false in fact, and absurd in consequence. That when they were elected the question was not agitated, could be no reason for declining to declare their opinion, for upon the same principle every new question whatever would require to be referred to a fresh house, thereby bringing about all the evils of annual, or even shorter, parliaments.— While the House is in session, they are bound to consider, and determine, as far as they can, all new questions that occur which regard to the common weal. Had they been required to legislate on the occasion they would have been bound to do so; and still more, when nothing further was required than a public declaration of what their sentiments were, as the counsellors, the advisers, and the well wishers, both of the crown and of the people. Moreover, as the speaker justly observed, "being called upon by His Majesty's representative to take this important measure into their serious consideration, they were bound by their duty to give an opinion upon this great and important question." But, many members appear to have been swayed, in giving their consent to the milk and water termination of the debate, by the idea that, in expressing an opinion, the House would be considered as expressing the opinion of the country. This is a mistaken notion; the opinion of the country has been, properly and constitutionally expressed in another way, and their opinion would only be that if a body of men, forming part of that country; one indeed of great weight, and responsibility; but whose opinion may be very different from that of the bulk of the people. The imperial parliament and His Majesty's government had a right to look for it; that they might weigh it, and compare it with all the others laid before them; and will be disappointed not to have it, along with those of the House of assembly and legislative council of the Lower province. Mr. Nichol, who however, was against the resolutions, and wished the house to decide upon the question, went

the future; for altho' there does not exist a shadow of apprehension that the British government would ever again countenance such proceedings; yet, should the Scotch faction ever get into absolute sway in this country, so inveterate are they against the French language, laws, customs, and people, that they would be glad to recommend a similar state-policy with respect to them, if they would not quietly submit to have their native gold melted down and amalgamated with imported dross.

so far as to assert that the House "was the only legal voice of the people," a doctrine that was properly reprobated by Mr. J. Jones. But what will not Mr. Nichol say, to destroy the shate which "the worthless mob of vagrants" who do not possess £500 sterling, may think they ought to have in making their own laws; he is for carrying every thing with a high hand.— Speaking of the Irish union, "The Parliament of England" says he, "did not want to consult the people, because it was for their good, that measure was carried." So do the fathers of the inquisition tell their victims, that it is for their good that they are condemned to the flames! A mode of arguing, equally detestable in politics as in religion.

(To be continued.)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREE PRESS.

SIR,

Looking over some of your late numbers, which I had, from want of leisure, but partially perused before, I perceive one that contains an article which I consider of no little importance. Though unwilling to engage in a controversy with so able a writer as your correspondent, A FRIEND TO TRUTH appears to be, I am nevertheless led to offer a few remarks upon the subject-matter\* of his communication, on account of the reasons by which they have been suggested, and with a view to call the public attention, as much as possible, to the subject on which he animadverts in pretty strong terms. After some allusions to the appointment of sheriff at Quebec, which seems too much like tearing the scab from off an old sore,† he plants his whole artillery against the managers of the Montreal general hospital. I do not intend to advocate the cause of those gentlemen, farther than may be found consistent so to do, upon

\*I take the opportunity of entering my protest against the use of this redundant double substantive, which has been for a number of years certainly, but entirely within my memory introduced into the phraseology of didactic and controversial writers and orators. It is a most ungraceful, unmeaning, & unnecessary tautology: subject or matter by itself would either be sufficient, and convey exactly the same sense; besides the impolicy of using them both at once thereby losing the opportunity of varying the expression, which is exemplified in this very letter.

L. L. M.

†Not so, it is opening the dressing of a new one, to see whether the virus has yielded to the topical remedy applied; which it, in fact, appears is not yet, and is not likely to be, the case.

L. L. M.

general principles; and I am extremely sorry to have occasion to impute wrong motives to your correspondent. "For," says he, "those at the head of the hospital, with characteristic modesty, would make of it a private concern, whereby to enhance their own merits in the public estimation; and by monopolizing all the medical students of Canada, make it a means of individual aggrandisement, and an avenue to fortune for themselves." Certainly this looks like jealousy. There are very few persons, in the present state of society, who are not, more or less, actuated by motives of self-interest. And, pray, where shall we look for entire disinterestedness? Not in the physician, not in the lawyer; no; nor do we find it in the divine.— Besides ambition, or a thirst for worldly aggrandisement, joined with the *amor famæ*, are found to be the main springs of human action. These serve as a perpetual incitement to the mariner, the student, and the statesman. As for their entertaining the most distant intention of "monopolizing all the medical students of Canada," it appears to me that the insinuation is truly unbecoming and preposterous.— However Mr. Editor, I should be led to apologise for trespassing upon you on this subject, did I not think its importance a sufficient excuse. I trust we shall again hear from A FRIEND TO TRUTH and, at the same time, that he will appear somewhat milder in his next epistle, or I should say to him.

*Quid ille quoque viro, et cui dicas saepe caveto.*

#### PHINEAS.

\* I have omitted some observations here respecting the conduct of former medical boards, which being to the same purpose as those made by A FRIEND TO TRUTH, it would have been but little else than repetition to insert. With regard to the views of the medical managers of the hospital, whatever they may be, it is most evident, that the inevitable consequence of their exclusive privileges must be a monopoly of the whole medical education of the country. This is very shrewdly pointed out by A FRIEND TO TRUTH; and has also been convincingly demonstrated in a series of letters which appeared in the *Spectateur Canadien*, under the signature of UN MEDECIN, which are worthy of attentive consideration. I. L. M.

MR. MACCULLOH,

I have lately observed with regret that your paper has been the vehicle, thro' which the enemies of an institution tending to promote the welfare of the public, have made known their diabolical spirit. None has surprised me more than the "preaching of Jonah," (*Scribbler*, No. 91.) In the first place he has asserted that our Augustus Cæsar has been very easily duped, in which he shews the great respect he has for his excellency. Secondly, he says that his excellency has no knowledge of the



gentlemen he alludes to ; and for this his audacity ought to be punished, as it casts a reflection on the sense and justice of the governor, by supposing that he would, contrary to all right and justice, promote to the honourable situation of board of examiners, people concerning whom he had not received certain proofs of their being capable of filling the responsible situation in which he has placed them.\* Thirdly he says, "it would be well if they would pursue other avocations more suitable to their genius, and to exercise the little knowledge they possess in endeavouring to alleviate the miseries of mankind." In what could they employ "the little knowledge they possess," better than in obeying the dictates of humanity by endeavouring to preserve from disease those who can not afford to pay for medical assistance. Fourthly, he has advised them to sink into obscurity again. To effect this it will require a stronger exhortation than that of a Jonah. The gentlemen whom he addresses are too much influenced by patriotic considerations to heed this flimsy preacher any farther than to laugh at his folly, and divert themselves with his endeavours to arrest the good they are dispensing to their poor neighbours. (Here follow some personal observations respecting some of the public lecturers on medical subjects in Montreal which have no bearing whatever upon the general question.) As to his statement of the origin of the medical institution, it is unnecessary to say that the fame of its founders will be transmitted to posterity without the labours of a Jonah. As he has threatened in a woful manner the fabric which is so much the object of his dislike, he will never fail to meet with opposition from,

#### ADVERSARIUS.

I will only say, respecting the preceding letters, as I have said on a former occasion, *valeant quantum valere possunt.*

L. M.

N. B. A few prospective observations on various subjects, to which the motto principally alludes, have been left out for want of room.

\* By the same rule, the appointment of no public men, nor their fitness or unfitness for the stations to which they are nominated, ought to be canvassed ; at least not censured ; whatever Cæsar Augustus does, must, according to this writer, be right, and those who hold that he may be mistaken, or misled by others, ought to be punished for saying so !

L. D. M.

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