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THE FREE PRESS.

Vol. I. MONTREAL, Thursday, 24th JUNE 1841. (No. 48)

Scriptur ad innum.

Qualis ab initio processerit et ab initio. HORTON.

Preserve the character, with which you set out, and be consistent to the last.

In resuming the publication of the Free Press, after a lapse of nearly ten months, it behoves me to make an apology to my subscribers and the public for the protracted suspension of the work. My removal from Burlington in Vermont to Rouse's Point in the state of New York, was announced in No. 46, published in August last; at which time I calculated upon having my printing office in operation, and matters so far forward, as to be able to resume the Free Press, in a few weeks. Circumstances, as uncontrollable by me, in themselves, as injurious to my pecuniary interests, concurred to defeat that expectation; and the difficulties attendant upon the establishment of an entirely new concern, with very limited means, in a spot, which, though convenient as to communication with Montreal, is, in a measure, remote, secluded, and yet scarcely populated, have necessarily compelled such unremitting exertion and attention to the mechanical part of the business, that my intellectual labours have been, hitherto, unavoidably confined to preparing matter for the Scribbler and the Harbinger. (See advertisement in last number.) productions, both which pay a profit, which the Free Press has not yet done; and consequently, in my situation, demanding preferent attention. Matters are now, however, gradually assuming a settled aspect, and I purpose to continue the Free Press, at least until the 52 numbers are completed; which will form a volume, and thus fulfil my engagement to the subscribers. I will endeavour to issue a number weekly, but can not positively promise to do so, until those 52 numbers are finished. If sufficient encouragement appears, I will continue the work, upon such other footing, as I may then consider advisable.

Looking over my last numbers, I perceive, there are two subjects announced "to be continued," namely,

Abstract of parliamentary proceedings of Lower Canada,

and *The Kingston bank bill, and matters relative thereto.*

As the first would now be nothing more than an historical

recital of what the public in Canada are as well acquainted with as I could make them, having nothing but the public papers to glean from; I think it will be best to discontinue it in favour of other objects of newer and more temporary interest. Besides I have never been favoured with those communications from members of the assembly which I had reason to expect, and which I was promised would be sent me, on the subject of the debates in the house. It was upon the faith of these expectations that the abstract was commenced in the hope of thereby making it more valuable than the common newspaper reports. Another inducement to cease from recording for the present the proceedings of that session, is that another has since taken place pregnant with important matters for political remark, which will, occasionally, call for reference and animadversion as I proceed.

With regard to the Kingston bank bill, the interest of that matter too has principally gone by. Unless therefore I am solicited to resume the subject, I shall equally discontinue it.

A subject which occupied a share of the pages of my late numbers, namely the institution of the Montreal general hospital, and its generally anti-Canadian and exclusive character, has been in the interval continued by the publication of one or two communications relative to it, in the Scribber; (*vide* No. 112 of that work.) It will therefore be dropped for the present, in this.

In No. 14 was given, in the garb of a dream, a parody of the opening speech of Lord Dalhousie to the Canadian parliament, at the session of Jan. 1825. At the close of that parody the genius of Canada, addressing the house of assembly, is made to express a fear that they would be cut short in their deliberations by "a passionate prorogation," and, in another place, she is described, in addressing a severe reprehensive admonition to the legislative council, as departing from parliamentary usage, in which, I believe, no precedent will be found of the upper house being specially and separately addressed from the throne. In closing the last session of the provincial parliament, it seems as if his excellency, the governor, had taken a hint or two out of my book, for, in the first place, the prorogation was a passionate one, and secondly, the most unprecedentedly, *did* address the legislative council separately and specially, not indeed as he ought to have done, reproving them for their unconstitutional, time-serving, and self-interested conduct, in refusing their concurrence to the money bills voted by the lower house, whereby every thing has been paralyzed; but, on the contrary, insulting the people of Canada, through the assembly, by lauding and commending the council for adopting a course hostile

to the interests of the province, and the stability of our dependence upon England, and which every truly loyal and patriotic inhabitant of Canada must deplore and condemn. Praise be to Heaven, however, this will probably be the last speech lord Dalhousie will have at in his power to make to a Canadian parliament; for, to the great joy and relief of nineteen twentieths of the population of the country, he is gone home; never, it is to be hoped, to return, at least as a governor; for which, no doubt, ministers, by this time, suspect him to be as unfit, as the Canadians are convinced he is.

As to the fulsome, false, and farcical address that was manufactured by the honourable John Richardson, *cum suis*, at Montreal, on the occasion of lord Dalhousie's departure, it will have no more weight at home, than the ten thousand signatures, of well recollected celebrity, of the union faction, had, when set in the balance against the otherwise universal voice of the country, and of both houses of the legislature. If his lordship, in his reply to that address, he seems to do, relies upon it as an exculpatory testimony in his favour, with the ministers who have recalled him, he relies upon a broken reed. That he is actually ordered home, to account for his administration, there can be no doubt, and the common blind of private affairs requiring him to visit England, is too palpable a subterfuge, to be considered otherwise than as a form of speech usual on such occasions, in which there is about as much truth as in a man's subscribing himself your most obedient humble servant. The epithets I have bestowed upon the address are well merited. It is *fulsome*, in its language, and in ascribing to his lordship every merit that a governor can have; but it is *false* almost throughout. It is *false* in asserting that "greater improvements in agriculture have been made; and a spirit of industry and enterprise excited in the colony," during his lordship's administration, than previously. The germs of these existed before, and were sown during that of his illustrious and lamented predecessor, his grace of Richmond; and it is their natural developement, (encouraged more by the high reputation lord Dalhousie brought with him from Nova Scotia, as a patron, lover, and promoter of agriculture, than by his active and/or peculiar fostering care,) that has caused the improvements generally supposed to have taken place in Lower Canada. However willing I am to give due credit to our ex-governor, (I hope I am justified in calling him so,) for his good intentions, to promote the best interests of his majesty's subjects, it is utterly false that his general conduct has tended to conciliate their affections. As a gentleman and a soldier, he may claim every merit, save that of conciliating affection, by affability and condescension.

It is true that, with a certain clan, the supposed influential and leading Scotchmen, (though, thank God, their influence is on the wane,) he could be hand and glove, familiar, and unceremonious, more so perhaps, than those who have been used to the upper circles at home, could suppose a nobleman would indulge in, towards uneducated and low-bred tradesmen. But with the real gentry, the real nobility, the really well educated and well-bred part of the community, the upper class of French Canadians, he associated little, and to them his manners appeared haughty and repulsive. Inaccessible, but to one he listened solely to the suggestions of interested individuals, and obstinate in his prepossessions, his demeanour, so far from tending to conciliate affection, has alienated the minds of the great bulk of the people. Never shall I forget the contrast I personally witnessed, between the behaviour of the late Duke of Richmond, and that of the Earl of Dalhousie, at the times they, respectively, first landed at Montreal as governors. The Duke, the moment he set his foot on the beach, with the condescension of true nobility, took off his hat, and unaccompanied by any military escort, (the garrison being drawn up on the ridge above the beach, behind the old mission-house,) walked through the opening ranks of the Canadian populace, bowing on each side, with uncovered head, and smiling affability and paternal benignity in his countenance, a genuine sample of a truly noble English Duke. The Earl, landing on the same spot, never touched his hat, which was fiercely cocked, in military style, and proceeded, with stately and erected front, looking neither to the right nor the left, between two ranks of soldiers with presented arms. Not a single salutation to the spectators, not a turn of the neck, or gratulating smile, were suffered to derogate from the dignity of the Scottish Earl. The behaviour of the two men, on the same occasion, stamped them both in my mind, for what they were; and as I judged them, so have they proved themselves: the one, honoured in his government, lamented in his death; the other, his administration all but detested, and his structure hailed with joy and exultation.

I regret that Lord Dalhousie has left Quebec on his return to England, before the Free Press could reach that place; but as I doubt not he will see it in London, he will perceive that there are men, (and I am proud to rank along with me the editors of the Canadian Spectator, and the Spectateur Canadien,) who will, boldly and publicly, tell him the truth, and not by the "flattering unction" to him of false commendation; men, not like those who have besought him, and deceived, and prompted him, (aye, prompted him, for his lordship suffered himself to be a tool to the Scotch faction,) to trample on the

rights of the assembly, and the necks of the Canadians. — nor, not like the honourable John Richardson, (never forget the honourable!) who might ask himself, with Pope's hero in the *Dunciad*, "Shall I like Curtius, desperate, in my zeal, O'er head and ears, plunge for the common weal, Or rob Rome's ancient gods of all their glories?" And, teaching, save the monarchy, of Tories, in the signature of *Essex*, in the *Acadian Recorder*, on the administration of justice in *Nov. 1. Scdm.*, "it sometimes happens with powerful governments as with prosperous individuals. The candid and honest reprov'er is kept at a distance; while they encourage and reward the sycophant servility of those who adhere to them for the sole purpose of advancing their own selfish interests. And who, in the time of trial, do not scruple to abandon or betray their benefactors." By these means the weak and worthless acquire power and influence, because none are so anxious to possess themselves of those advantages as those who are pre-determined to make a bad use of them. Those employments, which the arrogant and ignorant court on account of their apparent ease and dignity, the able and wise decline, knowing their weight.

But to return to the *Montreal address*, it is false in stating that constitutional supplies were refused, it is well known that liberal grants were constitutionally made by the assembly for every want of government, and was unconstitutionally rejected by the legislative council. But the address is *farcaical* in exaggerating however that the "successful efforts" of a disgraced and recalled governor, may obtain an effectual remedy for the grievances of which they affect to complain and is *farcaical* in alluding to the influence of his lordship with his majesty's government, when it is certain that it was only to get rid of his incessant importunities and solicitations, that ministers sent lord Dalhousie out to succeed the duke of Richmond, the unforeseen death of his grace, notwithstanding of a better arrangement, and his lordship having plagued government on the subject, even from before the time that Sir John Colborne Sherbrooke gave up the governorship of Canada.

But the earl's reply to the address is still worse, if worse can be. It assumes that the three hundred individuals who signed it are the only respectable inhabitants of Montreal; but this is in keeping with his constant and inveterate habit of considering "all the talents," "all the respectability," and all the influence, all the loyalty, and all the patriotism, in Canada, as concentrated in a contemptible junto of ignorant, uneducated, and self-interested Scotchmen. And what is to be said of the

intemperate predication, by which his lordship has been advised to stigmatize the virtuous and firm endeavours of the Canadian house of representatives, to hold fast their constitutional check upon the rapacity, peculation, and extravagance of the executive, as "an unreasonable and violent party-spirit." The insult is felt and appreciated; but need not further be noticed or retaliated, for it is not in the nature of noble minds to trample, even upon an inveterate and vindictive foe, when "fallen from his high estate."

This, perhaps, ought to be the place to notice the ridiculous stories, circulated from the New York Albion, of lord Dalhousie being intended for the government-general of India. Lord help us! Lord Dalhousie governor-general of India! There goes more to make that stuff, Lorenzo.

Then you can minister with your alchemy. And perhaps too here might be the place for noticing the rumours that are afloat of an intended combination of all the British American possessions, with a royal duke at their head, as viceroy. If such a plan were sufficiently liberal to lean to each province, (creating other intermediate provinces, as the geographical and other circumstances of the territories might require,) its own independent and local legislature, and admitting of a representative system by provinces, in forming a vice-regal council, or grand colonial senate, or congress, it might be eminently conducive to the general prosperity of the British empire, as well as to the separate and individual interests of each integral part of the system. But there is too much political castle-building in such a project, to suppose it either conceivable or practicable, in the present day.

There is an unfortunate complexion which always accompanies the acts of those who are self-willed, and arbitrarily inclined to set up their own despotic opinions, against those of testimony, even when they do right. This is exemplified in two of the last acts of lord Dalhousie, before his departure, which, though in themselves proper and required, lost all their grace, efficacy, and honour, by the motives that led to them, and the manner in which they have been performed.

The appointment of the young, inexperienced, and irresponsible, Wm. S. Sewell, the son of the chief justice, as sheriff of the district of Quebec, was not only the subject of much animadversion at the time, but was seriatim objected to, and petitioned against, by the house of assembly, upon grounds which the commonest sense must have perceived were irrefutably strong. Yet his lordship pertinaciously maintained the young man in his office. Now Mr. Sewell's state of health, it appears, is such that he is under the necessity of leaving

the country, and Lord Dalhousie has had to provide another sheriff. This has been done in the person of Thomas Ainslie Young, esq., a gentleman to whom none of the objections apply which were urged against Mr. Sewell, but the governor, constant to uphold his own appointment, has only called Mr. Young to the sheriffalty, jointly, and during the absence of Mr. Sewell. I doubt the legality of this, for there are now actually two sheriffs of Quebec, which, I should suppose, is both unprecedented and unconstitutional. But I will leave that question for the gentlemen of the long robe.

The other act to which I allude, is the removal of the police-magistrates of Montreal from office. Certainly, scarcely a better thing could have been done. The gross abuses that reigned in that portion of the administration of justice, that devolved upon the police, required a violent remedy. The tyrannical injustice, arrogance, partiality, and oppression; the ignorance and defiance of law; the extortion, the embezzlement of the property that came into the hands of the police, right or wrong, the connivance at the malpractices of the petty knaves, who prowled and preyed upon the miserable and destitute part of the community, under the sanction of the greater knaves who sat upon the bench;—were all so crying and enormous, that the destruction of that nest of bloodsuckers, was a duty, on the part of government, that ought long ago to have been performed. But, alas! it has not been a desire to benefit the public, to redress their injuries, or to prevent oppression, that has brought about this desirable change. No; it has been a paltry struggle for place and patronage; a battle between the right honourable the earl of Dalhousie, and the heads of the thief-taking society of Montreal, for the appointment of high constable of the district. The earl was worsted by the firmness of the magistrates in maintaining the nomination they had made, for they probably thought, since his lordship was going home, they could hold out till he was gone; and "a fico for thee then!" But they reckoned without their host, for his lordship vented his spite, for their resistance of his high and mighty pleasure, by turning them out of office.

Much has already been said in the public papers on the subject, and more is promised. In the mean time, let me give the devil his due, and highly applaud Mr. McCord and Mr. Mondélet, for their spirited resistance of what they considered as an encroachment upon the privilege of the bench of magistrates. And mark, how well things have turned out. By their unlooked for spirited behaviour, Mr. A. Delisle has retained the high constableness, a place for which I believe him to be better qualified than any whom I have yet known to fill.

And the consequence of their, in this instance, proper, and indeed noble, conduct (we will not be too nice in prying into their motives) has been, that they have themselves been turned out of office, in consummation, which was often and long before, devoutly to be wished.

To conclude this subject, for the present, I add part of a letter, addressed to me, as editor of the Scribber, which belongs more properly to this work.

Mr. Editor, — After much tergiversation and trucking, a certain gentleman of the long robe, has received the reward aimed at by his obsequiousness. Old squire McCord and Mr. Mondett, whatever their faults, in other respects, may be, have, by the unjust and arbitrary treatment they have received from a certain puissant seigneur, become objects of public sympathy, if not of respect, for their resolute conduct, which led to their dismissal from office. These gentlemen, for maintaining, in a dignified manner, the rights that were vested in their office, find because they opposed their indignation and respectful remonstrance, against the placing of a Scotch serjeant, as one of their officers, who is alike ignorant of the French language, the laws of the country, and the duties attached to the situation, hitherto filled by a Canadian gentleman, with equal credits to himself, and benefit to the country, were scabbed out their business: it being an established maxim at the great chateau, that right and decency should both be set aside, though due to the Canadian, when they clash with the ambition or interests of any hanger-on of the Scotch party.

Want of space compels me to break off here, and to postpone a variety of matters, but I trust that both in this and my succeeding numbers the public will see that, in the words of my motto, the FREEL PRESS preserves the character with which it set out, and will be consistent to the last.

LEWIS LANE McCULLOCH

I must, however, say that, certain in one instance, recorded in the public papers, and probably in others, he has acted inconsistently with the duty of a high constable. He is stated to have actually headed a party of constables, in arresting a man! A high constable, I repeat it, ought in no case to act as a constable. It compromises his dignity, and destroys the efficacy of that part of his duty which consists in keeping the constables in check, and preventing, listening to, and remedying, complaints against them. Hence no ought never to descend to be their companion.

I strongly doubt their right to appoint a high constable. See No 46. I have understood Mr. McCulloch to be a half-pay commissioned officer, if so, being a gentleman by profession, he may not make a bad high constable. But a non-commissioned officer could scarcely, in the nature of things, be fit for the station.

The further correspondence of CATON LE FEVRE is solicited.

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