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M. J. J. J.

THE FREE PRESS.

VOL. I.] MONTREAL, THURSDAY, 5th DEC. 1822. [No. 9.

—*Humanam quæ vitam turbat ab imo.* LUCRETIUS.

Disturbing the wellbeing of society, even to the very bottom.

—*Xanthæ retro propera.* OVID.

— You may as well

Stop the St. Lawrence, and turn back the Ott'wa.

A *pretended*, or *real*, letter, dated at St. Eustache, 2d Nov. *supposed to have been written*, or *actually written*, by an anti-unionist, to his friend in Montreal, having appeared in a late public print, devoted to the Scotch faction, it may not be amiss to combat the enemy with their own weapons; for which purpose, I copy, from the York Observer of the 3d ultimo, a *pretended* or *real* letter, *supposed to have been written*, or *actually written*, by one of the leaders of the unionists, to a confidential friend in Upper Canada. I shall leave it to the public to judge, whether either, or both, are genuine; but with regard to that which appeared in the Montreal Gazette, I must, indeed, either laud the great impartiality of the *very learned* editor of that paper, or admire his Bœotian thickness of intellect, in, even ironically, publishing such home-truths, making against his party, as appear in the supposed report of a speech made at the place in question. The orator, it is said, "stated that our country was in eminent (*imminent*) danger from conspirators, who were combining to undermine our happy constitution (*true*)"; that these conspirators were emigrant upstarts from Scotland, (*very true*.) who, for a time, lived upon the sweat of our brows, making fortunes to carry off to their native mountains, (*true again*;) that England, through the artful misrepresentations of these ungrateful pedlars, (*colporteurs*) was actually passing a bill, (*this should be, had actually been upon the point of passing a bill,*) against the dearest interests of the Canadian people (*true*;) this bill affects their civil and religious liberty, (*true*.) since it tends to subvert our language, our laws, our institutions (*true*.) and to make our curates and their parishioners independent of their bishops, (*very true, the junto attempted to swindle the Catholic clergy out of their chiefst privileges, by false pretences that all were to re-*

man as heretofore,) and of his Holiness the Pope (*this seems a very needless interpolation,*) by placing them under the influence of the Governor, (*true, and thereby departing, not only from the rule of church-discipline, adopted in the Romish persuasion, but acting essentially in opposition to the principles of ecclesiastical government in England,*) That Mr. R—— (*Richardson*) may become our governor (*God forbid!*) and if Mr. R—— held the keys of St. Peter, could any one in his senses believe that he would let the Canadians into paradise? (*a figurative, but most forcible and just illustration of the vile and selfish principles that actuate the party;*) &c. &c.

The patrons of the Gazette, were no doubt, exceedingly scandalised, to see so many truths printed in a paper devoted to very different purposes; but what do they say to the letter which the York Observer has printed? and which, not having seen republished in any Lower Canada paper,* and considering it ought to be, I now proceed with.

Montreal, 24th Oct. 1822.

DEAR SIR,

Much depends on your exertions, on the question of the union. If you and other friends do not exert your interest and influence in the Upper Province, we must become the laughing-stock, and a bye-word, for the constitutionalists, as the pit we have dug for them, is yawning to receive ourselves.

In proceeding, you must recollect that our ulterior object, is the overthrow of the present constitution. The union itself, is a secondary consideration: for to unite the provinces under the principles of the 31 Geo. III (one of the worst acts of Pitt's administration) would be felt by us and all those TRUE LOYALISTS, who are anxious to create places, and secure them for their families, as a calamity of a most terrible description.

You know the present constitution is not at all suited to the country. Under it the lower house can never become a well constructed instrument of individual advancement, but will remain a faithful organ of public feeling; you must therefore feel as great an interest in opposing the union under the existing act,

* I was misled in my last, by the circumstance of the Montreal Herald of the 16th ult. having been neglected to be forwarded to me, to suppose that Mr. Dalton's speech at Kingston had remained unnoticed in the Lower Canada papers; there were, however, many points in it well worthy of repetition, and I therefore do not regret its insertion. In same manner neither shall I regret having here copied the above letter from the York Observer, should I even afterwards find that it has re-appeared in Montreal.

as you do in effecting it under the admirable terms of the bill introduced last session of parliament.

We expected the aid of the clergy in your province, but have been disappointed. They must know that if the union be effected according to the terms we propose, their revenues will be increased four fold, by the establishment of a tithe-law, which will follow as a matter of course. Yet, strange to relate, under a feeling of godliness, they are so blind to their own interests, that they have declined all interference in the measure; this would have been a deathblow to our hopes, unless for the pliancy of the press.

We have secured by bribes and purchase, the whole of the English press in the province. Waller has been removed for his senseless patriotism, and a pliant and willing tool in accomplishing our designs, has succeeded him.

It is impossible for the Brockville paper to oppose our cause, as the speaker of your House of Assembly, who has, we understand, the controul of it, will, in case the bill passes in its present shape, receive his salary for life, or until some other situation is provided for him.*

The patriotism and wisdom of the Chronicle, at Kingston, are its best security; and we hope the Herald will, in future, reject all constitutional communications.

The Observer paper in York, apparently conducted by some illiterate person, has done great mischief; his coarse remarks are not only copied into the French papers, but are swallowed with avidity by the ignorant Gallo-Canadians. It has created a spirit of opposition in some, that were favourable to us before. Why not urge the Junius of the present day, whose tropes and figures have been admired by all the literary characters in these provinces, to reply to him? Purchase him if possible.

If men of talents have their price, surely a few pounds, and a promise of future reward, would stop the organ of that fellow, who appears as hostile to his own interest, on the present occasion, as the clergymen of the established church, are blind to theirs.

Our old acquaintance, Heron, appears to be running-headlong to ruin. His remarks in the Gleaner, have given great offence;

* The Editor of the Observer remarks, "Our friends need not doubt the integrity of our speaker; he is too honourable to sell, for base lucre, the liberties of his country; and if we know any thing of the gentlemen who conduct the press in this province, we may safely say, that nothing but honest conviction will guide them in the opinions which they may offer, on this momentous question."

particularly that part touching upon spies and informers. — Tell him he must act more cautiously in future, or else * * * *

The colonel, in his last letter, states that the members of Gourlay's convention, (three of whom are under his thumb,) are doing their utmost, in a disguised manner, to support our cause. They can never have a better opportunity of retrieving their characters with the government; and you may assure them from us, that their claims for services shall be attended to. Advise them to appear openly.

We presume after the eloquent piece published in your Government Gazette, that no person holding, or expecting, a situation under the government, durst support the constitutionists. Had the government-gazette of this province acted on the same SOUND principles, instead of calling upon the rabble to petition the British parliament, our supporters would have been more numerous. at all events, our opponents would have been less

The commercial houses in this town, intend to exercise an unusual lenity towards those indebted to them in the Upper Province, provided they support us on this trying occasion; but if they offer the least opposition to our designs, they must expect consequences of the most ruinous kind to follow *

No time is to be lost in feeling the pulse of the people on this question. If they support us, it is all well; if not, speak to the colonel to recommend the convening of parliament as soon as possible. By this measure, we may divert the minds of the people for some time. Their petitions may be delayed, so as that the business will (here the Scotchman breaks out, will for may) be disposed of in London, before they reach there; or they may be induced to petition the provincial parliament — In either case we are sure of success. But, should we be baffled in these latter objects; oppose the union altogether: for, if the union be effected under the 31st of his late Majesty, the independence of the Gallo-Canadians, aided by a dozen similar characters from the Upper Province, must blast our hopes for ever.

Poor R——'s† situation is truly distressing. The purturbed state of his mind ever since the news arrived of the post-

* On this the editor observes, "Several merchants have honoured us with their acquaintance. Gentlemen who fought the battles of the country, and drove a foreign foe from our soil; and we have no hesitation in asserting, that, notwithstanding the menace from below, they will act an honest and an honourable part on the present occasion."

† I hate all blanks and dashes, and think the name, Richardson, might as well have been printed in full. L. L. M.

ponement of the bill is indescribable. He is not only agonized in the day, but admits that it preys so heavily on his feelings, he loses his rest at night. He intends proceeding with the petition to England. We should feel gratified to hear him and Sir James, whom he intends to wait upon, in conversation. He says all his misery is owing to the intermeddling disposition of the latter.

We were obliged to meet in private, as the opponents of the measure in this quarter are ten to one. However, we shall devise means to swell the signatures. Copies of the necessary resolutions and petitions, have been forwarded to our friends. Desire them to call upon the friends of re-union alone to meet.— Let them not touch upon any of the clauses of the bill.

We remain, dear sir, your's &c

To those who pay attention to the resolutions passed at the different meetings of the advocates for the union, the great inconsistencies that exist between the opinions of the several meetings, as well even in the resolutions of the same meeting must be obvious; whilst those of the constitutionalists are generally both uniform in principle, and decisive in their condemnation, *in toto*, of the odious bill, a parliamentary sanction of which, was attempted to be swindled out of the English ministry. In the focus of the faction of swindlers, who tried to put this cheat upon the nation; the central bureau for their undermining cabals,—Montreal,—the resolutions of the junto of unionists, breathe not a word against the many clauses in that bill, which are subversive of every *English* principle of liberty, but in proportion as we recede farther from this festering ulcer that is in the middle of us, the more symptoms may be found of returning health, the proud-flesh, party-coloured like a taitan kilt, subsides, the fetid current of servility is stopped, the exco-riation is less, & bounds seem to be put to the inflammation, by the effective styptics of the generous feelings of liberty, that may be obscured, but can never be smothered, in the bosoms of *Englishmen*. This will be evident upon an inspection of the strings of resolutions already severally published. The Eastern townships, it is true, who have long laboured under real, or supposed, grievances, from the want of courts, roads, and other benefits, which the more populous parts of the province enjoy, and who have been led to believe that their grievances are to be attributed to the prevalence of the French interest in the assembly, have been decisive, and some of them vehement, in approving of the proposed union. Their aid to the cause of the unionists is however, given simply upon the ground that, being in a situation they do not like, they consider change, whatever it may be, as likely to improve that situation. If they

were once convinced that they could obtain all the advantages they require, without an union of Upper and Lower Canada, they would join the other party without delay, as they are generally men who are, even perhaps to excess, devoted to the cause of liberty, and enemies of oppression and slavery. I feel confident that I could convince both them, that distinct legislatures for moderately extended provinces, are the best means of preserving general freedom, and personal rights; and the French *Canadians*, that it is greatly their interest to conciliate the opinions, and promote the prosperity, of the inhabitants of the townships. This however, I must reserve till another time, as I have strayed from my subject. Reverting to it, after just noticing that the meeting at Glengary, where they are all *Scotchmen*, and many of them retired North Westers, seemed disposed to go all lengths with their *knitmen* here, I will only refer to the resolutions of the friends of the *re-union*, as they style themselves, held at Perth, and at Prescott. In the former, the obnoxious clauses in the intended union-bill, for the increase of the money-qualifications, for members of the assembly, and for the admission of any members of the executive government amongst the commons, unless sent there by the suffrages of the people, are deservedly reprobated; and moreover, seeing the absurdity of having two executives and one legislature, they desire to have but one general government for the whole. In the latter, whilst by one resolution they desire "to hold inviolate, the privileges of the representative body, *in spirit and in form*," by another they express their "high satisfaction," with the bill that was introduced into parliament, which certainly, most notoriously, went to violate, and even to abrogate those privileges, *both in spirit and in form*. Another resolution of this meeting, goes part of the way which I have gone, on a former occasion, in stating that, "from the relative geographical situation of the provinces, it is evident that a GENERAL CONGRESS, of legislative authority, having a common controul over both, is absolutely necessary for their prosperity; even admitting that the separate provincial legislatures, should continue to exist for the purposes of local and municipal usefulness." Here, I partly chime in with them, although I should not be inclined to give to such a congress (a name too, by the bye, that I should wish to change to some other, such as a GENERAL COUNCIL for British North America,) any legislative authority, beyond such as each province that composed it, would be inclined to consent to; and I should be desirous to go still farther, and say that such a General Council, in which all the provinces, both such as now exist, and others to be hereafter erected, in proportion as population might increase, were represented, would be the best union, and bond of union, that could exist, both between the colonies themselves, and between

them and the metropolitan state. This leads me to another part of my subject, in which I will make use of a part of the expressions and reasoning, employed lately by the Courant, in an article headed "*The Brasils.*" but deducing from them, a diametrically opposite conclusion. The complete separation of Brazil from Portugal, (thus runs the article in question,) is worthy of some attention, and adds another to the many proofs already furnished by history and experience, that, in same manner, as the offspring of all animals, when arrived at maturity, and capable of maintaining themselves, leave their parents, and seek an establishment, so colonies, possessing resources, enabling them to exist unaided, invariably assume independence. Thus Great Britain, notwithstanding her maritime strength, military prowess, financial prosperity, and partizan-influence, lost an invaluable proportion of hers, in the new world. Those of Spain have nearly achieved their liberation; and now, Brazil, has, as it were, bloodlessly accomplished hers. The boy must submit to command, because he is conscious of weakness, and destitute of resource: in the youth, habit produces obedience, but improving intellect, impels him to examine the command, while the consciousness of increasing strength, half-disposes him to resist it, if unreasonable. The man, however, in the vigour of his age, boldly canvasses the acts required of, or prohibited to, him, and wholly discards parental authority, when exercised harshly. The period of maturity must arrive to colonies, as to human beings, and, as the parent state can not always have at the helm of government, men capable of managing the vessel when storms arise, colonies must, sooner or later, by grant, negotiation, or rebellion, become independent. So far we go together, but from these premises, the writer of that article draws the conclusion, that, since Canada has not an extensive maritime boundary, it can never walk alone, but must for ever remain in leading-strings. But this assumption proceeds upon the erroneous principle, that *the only essential* which can give life and existence to an independent state, is *maritime commerce*: this I deny; commerce is a great source of prosperity and wealth, of power and influence; but it is not the only, nor even the first and principal essential, necessary to obtain them: agriculture is far above it, is its parent, and will produce it, whether the state be bounded by the ocean, or by mountains and rivers: commerce, I contend, is only a secondary, and subordinate, medium of welfare and independence; nay, I am inclined to look upon it in the light of a necessary evil, certainly one we can not do without, in the present state of political relations, but also one, in the way it is now carried on, which is the source of more national and individual turpitude, and evil, than any other accident that can be predicated, as appertaining to the division of mankind into nations and tongues.

But, it is not true, that an extended sea-coast, or any sea-coast at all, has been found to be absolutely necessary to the assumption of independence, or the internal prosperity of a colony.— Look at the celebrated kingdom of the Jesuits in Paraguay; look at the interior provinces of South America; look at the increasing population and power of the western states in our neighbourhood. Like them, Upper Canada contains within itself, the germs of innumerable, and Lower Canada, those of several, commonwealths; nay, who will deny, that as ages roll on, these provinces must one day or other, open to themselves the means of a traffic, across the Pacific, to China and India? The interposition of the claims of Russia, to the North West coast, will be nothing, unless indeed, that North West coast be actually colonized by the Russians, previously to the extension of our settlements so far, and even then, it is impossible but that they must, either by negotiation or by force, give us the means for our trade to pass thro' their territories, into the ocean.— Now, considering the matter in this light, and that the British North American possessions, curtailed and mutilated even as they are, by the miserably shortsighted policy, & ignorance, of the British rulers, who agreed to the several boundary-treaties that have been made with the States, yet contain the stamina for creating and consolidating a complete counter-balance to the aspiring ambition, and already overgrown power and extent, of that collection of republics, it ought to be considered as an object of vital importance to the British empire, to conciliate the affectious, improve the situation, and finally, give a limited independence, to a number of commonwealths in this part of the globe, whereby the power, and prosperity of the parent state, would be better upheld, than by attempting to retain them longer in the leading-strings of parental authority, than circumstances will warrant. The only questions, then are, first, whether these colonies, are already far enough advanced or not, and, as I have no hesitation in saying, that they are not yet sufficiently advanced, to become independent, what are the best means for accelerating that end.

The discussion of these questions, however, would lead to a much wider field than is now in my purview, from which I therefore abstain, till a future opportunity may call it forth.

L. L. M.

I am favoured with CONSISTENCY'S further letter and explanation, of which, I shall avail in next number; he may rest assured that whenever a letter is requested to be destroyed, it is so, after it has been made use of. PHILO CANADIAN, is too jejune, and contains nothing in substance, but what has already appeared in the Free Press. A criticism on the *Delights of the Union*, has been unavoidably postponed.