

You may choose a husband now, child, from among the peasage.

'And will you not invite me to your wedding?' inquired little Lucy, advancing and taking Margaret by the hand.

This simple query, and the movement which accompanied it, seemed to have the effect of dispelling the reverie of the young heiress. She tried to speak, but her heart beat too high for utterance, and tears gushed over at her eyes. After a moment's pause, she extended her hand to Harry Harcourt, and, blushing, stammered out: 'You, my friend, my more than brother; will you not permit me still to remain among your circle here? Will you not heighten my good fortune by sharing with me what I owe to your kindness?'

'I knew how the romance would end,' cried Mrs. Maxwell; 'and Margaret has acquired good right to press her leap year's privilege.' A smile of serene contentment and placid joy was spread over every countenance, in that pleasant group. Harry pressed to this lips the white hand which still rested in his; then bending forward to kiss her forehead, he whispered a vow to make Margaret Clifford speedily a happy bride.

Mrs. Maxwell challenged the whole company to attest the verity of the Scottish tradition, which insisted that a kind deed wrought on Christmas day was sure to bring good fortune to the doer.

## The Politician.

### CANADIAN AFFAIRS.

#### LORD ELGIN'S OFFICIAL DESPATCH.

Government House, Montreal, }  
April 30, 1849.

My Lord,—I regret to state that rioting, attended with some consequences much to be regretted, though happily with no injury to life, or, except in one instance, to person, has taken place in the city of Montreal during the last few days. I hasten to furnish your lordship with an account of what has actually occurred, lest you should be misled by exaggerated reports conveyed through the United States.

2. In consequence of the unexpected arrival of vessels with merchandise at the port of Quebec, it became necessary for me to proceed, on a short notice, to Parliament, on Wednesday last, in order to give the royal assent to a customs bill which had that day passed the legislative council; and I considered that, as this necessity had arisen, it would not be expedient to keep the public mind in suspense by omitting to dispose, at the same time, of the other acts in which the two branches of the local Parliament had at an earlier period of the session concurred, and which still awaited my decision. Among these was the act to provide for the indemnification of parties in Lower Canada whose property was destroyed during the rebellion in 1837 and 1838, with respect to which, as your Lordship is aware, much excitement has unhappily been stirred.

3. I herewith enclose, for your lordship's perusal, a printed copy of the act in question, and I shall not fail by the first mail to furnish you with full information respecting its character and objects, the circumstances which led to its introduction, and the grounds on which I resolved, after much reflection, to sanction it. No money can be paid under this indemnity for a considerable period, so that her Majesty's power of disallowance can be exercised with effect, should her Majesty be so advised, notwithstanding the course which I have taken. As I am writing this despatch in haste, with a view to its transmission by way of New York, I shall confine myself for the present to a statement of the proceedings by which the peace of the city has been disturbed.

4. In order, however, to render this narrative intelligible, I must premise that for some time past the House of Assembly, as at present constituted, has been the object of bitter denunciation, and not unfrequently of reckless language, on the part of a certain portion of the press of the Province, and more especially of that of Montreal. Your lordship will probably recollect that the body in question is the product of a general election which took place about eighteen months ago, under the auspices of the political party now in opposition, and after a dissolution to which I had recourse, on their advice, for the purpose of strengthening them in their position as a Government. The result of this measure was in the last degree unfavorable to those who had recommended it, not, however, so much so in Lower Canada, where the complexion of the representation was little affected by the dissolution, as in the upper province, where several constituencies, among which were some of the most populous, rejected Conservative in favor of Liberal candidates. On a question of confidence raised at the commencement of the session, immediately after the general election, the administration was defeated by a majority of more than two to one, and a change of government, as a matter of course, ensued.

5. This alteration in the political complexion of the Assembly, and the change of government consequent upon it, were therefore clearly and distinctly traceable to a revulsion of sentiment in the British constituencies of Upper Canada. In Lower Canada nothing had occurred to account for either. This circumstance has, however, failed to secure for the decisions of the popular representative body either forbearance or respect from a certain section of those who profess to be emphatically the supporters of British interests. To denounce the Parliament as French in its composition, and the government as subject to French influences, has been their constant object, and

the wildest doctrines have been broached with respect to the right which belongs to a British minority of redressing by violence any indignity to which it may be subjected from such a source. I have now before me an article that appeared in one of the principal English newspapers of Montreal at a very early period of the session, of which I transcribe the concluding paragraph, as illustrative of the temper and language in which, even at that time, and before the public mind had been excited by the discussion of the Rebellion Losses Bill, a portion of the press ventured to criticize the proceedings of the local Parliament. The article treats of a measure affecting the townships, to which, I believe, no great objection was raised in Parliament. It terminates, however, in the words:—'We are glad of it—the sooner the cloven foot is made visible the better; the obvious intention of that majority, composed of Frenchmen, aided by traitorous British Canadians, is to force French institutions still further upon the British minority in Lower Canada. The intention is obvious, as we said, and we are very glad that it is openly shown. We trust that the party of the government will succeed in every one of their obnoxious measures.—When French tyranny becomes insupportable we shall find our Cromwell. Sheffield, in the olden times, used to be famous for its keen and well-tempered whetstones; well, they make bayonets there now just as sharp and just as well-tempered. When we can stand tyranny no longer, it will be seen whether good bayonets in Saxon hands will not be more than a match for a mace and a majority.'

6. To persons accustomed to the working of constitutional government in well-ordered communities, it may seem incredible that such language should be employed by the organs of any respectable party in reference to a body comprising the freely chosen representatives of a constituency formed on a most popular basis; but the cause of the anomaly is apparent enough to all who are acquainted with the history of Canada. For a series of years the popular representative body and the executive, supported by the legislative council, were, in the lower province especially, in a condition of almost constant antagonism. To revile the one was the surest test of patriotism; to denounce the other, of loyalty. In a society singularly democratic in its structure, where diversities of race supplied special elements of confusion, and where, consequently, it was most important that constituted authority should be respected, the moral influence of law and government was enfeebled by the existence of perpetual strife between the powers that ought to have afforded to each other a mutual support. No state of affairs could be imagined less favorable to the extinction of national animosities, and to the firm establishment of the gentle and benignant control of those liberal institutions which it is England's pride and privilege to bestow upon her children.

7. I am not without hope that a steady adherence to the principles of constitutional government, and the continuance of harmony between the co-ordinate branches of the legislature, may lead in the process of time to the correction of these evils; meanwhile, however, I must ascribe mainly to the cause which I have assigned the tone of arrogant defiance with which the resolutions, not of the government only, but also of the Parliament, are treated by the parties who happen for the moment to be unable to make their views prevail with either, and the acts of violence to which this inflammatory language has in the present instance led.

8. That many persons conscientiously disapprove of the measure respecting rebellion losses in Lower Canada, which has been introduced by the government, and which the local Parliament has passed by large majorities, and that in the minds of others it stirs national antipathies and recollections of former conflicts, which designing politicians seek to improve to their own selfish ends, cannot, I fear, be doubted. It is, therefore, emphatically a measure which should have been approached with calmness and caution, by all at least who are not directly interested in the issue. Unfortunately, however, this has been by no means the case. Not only have appeals to passion of the most reckless description proceeded from the local press, but they have received encouragement from quarters from which they had little right to look for it. Passages such as the following, in which a London journal of influence treats of the British population as affected by the measure in question, 'They are tolerably able to take care of themselves, and we very much misconstrue the tone adopted by the English press and English public in the province if they do not find some means of resisting the heavy blow and great discouragement which is aimed at them,' are read with avidity, and construed to mean that sympathy will be extended from influential quarters at home to those who seek to annul the obnoxious decision of the local legislature, whatever be the means to which they resort for the attainment of that object.

9. The scenes by which the city of Montreal has been lately disgraced are the natural fruits of an agitation of this character, operating on a people of excitable temper, who have been taught to believe that a race which they despise, and over which they have been wont to exercise domination, has obtained, through the operation of a constitutional system, an authority which it could not otherwise have acquired. Hence, more especially, their vehement indignation against me personally, and the conviction, in many cases I doubt not perfectly sincere, that I have been guilty of a serious dereliction of duty because I have not, as my predecessors have often done before me, consented to place myself in the front of an agitation to counteract the policy of Parliament. The nature of the constitutional doctrines which

practically obtain in this section of the community is curiously exemplified by the fact, that it is not the passage of the bill by an overwhelming majority of the representatives of the people, or the acquiescence of the council, but the consent of the Governor, which furnishes the pretext for an exhibition of popular violence.

10. When I left the House of Parliament after giving the royal assent to several bills, to which I have referred, I was received with mingled cheers and hootings by a crowd by no means numerous, which surrounded the entrance to the building. A small knot of individuals, consisting, it has since been ascertained, of a respectable class of society, pelted the carriage with missiles which they must have brought with them for the purpose.—Within an hour after this occurrence, a notice, of which I enclose a copy, issued from one of the newspaper offices, calling a meeting in the open air. On a sudden, whether under the effect of momentary excitement, or in pursuance of a plan arranged beforehand, the mob proceeded to the House of Parliament, where the members were still sitting, and, breaking the windows, set fire to the building and burned it to the ground. By this wanton act public property of considerable value, including two excellent libraries, has been utterly destroyed. Having achieved their object, the crowd dispersed, apparently satisfied with what they had done. The members were permitted to retire unmolested, and no resistance was offered to the military, who appeared on the ground, after a brief interval, to restore order and aid in extinguishing the flames. During the two following days a good deal of excitement prevailed in the streets, and some further acts of incendiarism were perpetrated. Since then the military force has been increased, and the leaders of the disaffected party have shown a disposition to restrain their followers, and to direct their energies towards the more constitutional object of petitioning the Queen for my recall, and the disallowance of the obnoxious bill. The proceedings of the House of Assembly will also tend to awe the turbulent. I trust, therefore, that the peace of the city will not be again disturbed. The newspapers which I enclose contain full, and I believe pretty accurate accounts, of all that has occurred since Wednesday last.

11. The Ministry are blamed for not having made adequate provision against these disasters; that they by no means expected that the hostility to the Rebellion Losses Bill would have displayed itself in the outrages which have been perpetrated during the last few days is certain. Perhaps sufficient attention was not paid by them to the intemperance of the opposition press. It must be admitted, however, that their position was one of considerable difficulty. The civil force of Montreal—a city containing about 70,000 inhabitants of different races, with secret societies and other agencies of mischief in constant activity,—consists of two policemen under the authority of the government, and seventy appointed by the corporation. To oppose, therefore, effectual resistance to any considerable mob, recourse must be had in all cases either to the military, or to a force of civilians enrolled for the occasion. Grave objections, however, presented themselves in the present instance to the adoption of either of these courses, until the disposition to tumult on the part of the populace unhappily manifested itself in overt acts. More especially was it of importance to avoid any measure which might have had a tendency to produce a collision between parties on a question in which their feelings were so strongly excited. The result of the course pursued is, that there has been no bloodshed, and except in the case of some of the Ministers themselves, no destruction of private property.

12. The proceedings in the Assembly have been important. I enclose the copy of an address which has been voted to me by a majority of 36 to 16, expressive of abhorrence at the outrages which have taken place in the city of Montreal, of loyalty to the Queen, and approval of my just and impartial administration of the government with my late as well as my present advisers. Some of the Opposition approve of the course which I have taken with respect to the Rebellion Losses Bill, as appears from the speeches of Messrs. Wilson and Galt, of which reports are given in the newspapers which I enclose. Mr. Wilson is an influential member of the Upper Canada Conservative party, and Mr. Galt's views are the more important, because he has been returned to Parliament only a few days ago by a Lower Canadian constituency which comprises a large British population. Generally, however, as the amendments they moved to the address show, they desire to avoid committing themselves on this point. The votes against the address may be thus classed—Sir A. McNab and his party; my late Ministers and their party; and Mr. Papineau. The first acts with perfect consistency in voting as he has done on this occasion; for he has always contended that government conducted on British principles is unsuited to Canada. The course of the second class is less intelligible; for, until the day on which they resigned their offices into my hands, they uniformly expressed approval of the principles on which my conduct as Governor General was guided; and these, as your lordship well knows, have undergone no change with the change of administration. Mr. Papineau's vote conveys a useful lesson which will not, I trust, be lost on persons who had been induced to believe that the persecution of which I am now the object, is really attributable to my having shown undue lenity to those who were led by him into rebellion.

13. I have now furnished your lordship with as clear a statement of these important occurrences as I can give, and I can conclude by assuring you that the city is perfectly tranquil,

and that there is no present likelihood of a renewal of disturbances. A few days will show what echo the proceedings of the violent party awaken in Upper Canada, and to what extent they are followed by reaction. Meanwhile, it is my firm conviction, that if this dictation be submitted to, the government of this province by constitutional means will be impossible; and that the struggle between overbearing minorities, backed by force, and majorities resting on legality and established forms, which has so long proved the bane of Canada, driving capital from the province, and producing a state of chronic discontent, will be perpetuated. At the same time, I think that if I am unable to recover that position of dignified neutrality between contending parties, which it has been my unremitting study to maintain, and from which I would appear to have been for the moment driven—not, as I firmly believe, through any fault of my own, but by the unreasoning violence of faction—it may be a question with your lordship whether it would not be for the interests of her Majesty's service that I should be removed from my high office, to make way for one who should not indeed hold views at variance with mine, with respect to the duties of a constitutional governor, but who should have the advantage of being personally unobnoxious to any section of her Majesty's subjects within the province.

I have, &c.,  
ELGIN and KINCARDINE,  
The Right Hon. Earl Grey, &c.

## The British Press.

From the London Tablet.

#### LORD ELGIN'S DESPATCH.

Since the remarks on Canada in the former article were written, a variety of papers have been laid before Parliament, and amongst them the first despatch of Lord Elgin, with an Appendix containing along with other documents the text of the Provincial Act which has been made the occasion of so much senseless violence.

This text enables us to satisfy our readers through their own eyes of the justice of our previous statement in one essential particular; we mean the perfect identity of the measure now rebelled against by the Loyalists out of place with the measure passed by the very same Loyalists when they were in place.

In Upper Canada eight years ago, as now in Lower Canada, the inevitable question arose—who were to be considered rebels, and consequently not entitled to compensation; and many peaceable men publicly complained, in petitions to the Assembly, that their property had been wantonly destroyed by armed bodies of Loyalists because they were suspected of rebellion. All parties judged that it was unfair and impracticable to compel honest men to prove their loyalty; that every man not proved guilty ought to be judged innocent; and that compensation should be paid for all damage unjustly committed and by whatever side committed. That no doubt might remain on this point, Mr. Baldwin moved, and the Conservatives unanimously adopted, a clause which runs in the following words:—

'And be it enacted, &c., that the powers vested in, and duties required of, the said Commissioners, under the said Act, shall extend to inquire into all losses sustained by her Majesty's subjects and other residents within that part of this Province to which the said Act extends, from the first breaking out of the said rebellion to the passing of the said Act, and the several claims and demands which have accrued to any such persons by such losses in respect of any loss, destruction, or damage of property occasioned by violence on the part of persons in her Majesty's service, or by violence on the part of persons acting or assuming to act on behalf of her Majesty in the suppression of the said rebellion, or for the prevention of further disturbances, and all claims arising under or in respect of the occupation of any houses or other premises by her Majesty's naval or military forces, either Imperial or Provincial.'

This was the Conservative measure for Upper Canada in 1841, when the Conservatives were in power, and eat the bread and butter of the State. The following is the clause of 1849 for Lower Canada, when the Conservatives are out of power; and when consequently they stir up rebellion and arson, and propagate every kind of deliberate falsehood to blacken Lord Elgin for giving the Royal assent to their own words and enactments.

'XI And be it enacted that the powers vested in, and duties required of, the said commissioners, or of any three of them, under this Act, shall also extend and be construed to extend to inquire into all such losses sustained by her Majesty's subjects and other residents within the said late province of Lower Canada, and the several claims and demands which have accrued to any such persons by such losses, in respect of any loss, destruction, or damage of property occasioned by violence on the part of persons in her Majesty's service, or by violence on the part of persons acting or assuming to act on behalf of Her Majesty, in the suppression of the said rebellion, or for the prevention of further disturbances, and all claims arising under or in respect of the occupation of any houses or other premises by her Majesty's naval or military forces, either imperial or provincial; subject always to the limitations and exceptions contained in the preamble to this Act.'

The reader sees that the words, with a few variations of form, are absolutely the same. The pretence, then, that the Conservatives cannot assent to this Act because its purpose is to pay men for being rebels, is nothing less than a fraud.