

COLONIAL.

LOWER CANADA.

PUBLIC DINNER

IN HONOR OF ANDREW STUART, ESQ.
MONDAY, 17th Nov.

The friends and supporters of ANDREW STUART, Esq., the Constitutional Candidate at the late Election for the Upper Town of Quebec, resolved to invite that gentleman to a Public Dinner, as a testimony of respect for his high and independent character and long services in public life.

Tables were laid in the ball room of the Albion Hotel, extending the whole length of the apartment, and united at the top by a horse shoe. The decorations of the room were happily executed, and the devices, all of the most loyal and constitutional character, were deservedly admired. Above the President's chair was a beautiful transparency of the Imperial Arms, surmounted by evergreens, and supported by the national colours, festooned along the walls in graceful curves. At the bottom of the room above the orchestra, was another transparency, representing the Crown and other national emblems, with the motto "Law and Constitution," and underneath, two hands firmly clasped, with the motto "We'll support them." A pair of colours belonging to the Fourth Regiment of Canadian Militia, appearing one on each side of the transparency, together with a continuation of the festoons of naval flags. In the centre of the south side of the room there was another appropriate transparency, representing the British Union Flag planted by a British Tar. Towards this were seen three figures advancing, representing England, Ireland, and Scotland, arm in arm and shoulder to shoulder. Above was the motto of the Order of the Bath, "Tria juncta in uno."

On the arrival of Mr. A. Stuart, who was received by a merry peal of hand bells from the ringers, placed in the lobby, under the direction of Mr. Cole, Dinner was served, and the company proceeded two and two, the guests being conducted by the President, Vice Presidents and Stewards, the latter bearing sky blue badges of ribbon, on which was the inscription "Stuart and Union." On entering the room through the arch, the coup d'œil was striking in the extreme; the decorations—the profusion of light judiciously mingled with the gay colours displayed upon the walls and reflected by the plate upon the table—had a most brilliant and exhilarating effect, heightened by the March played by the Band of the 32d Regiment, kindly afforded by the Commanding Officer.

As may be supposed, the first toast proposed from the Chair was,—

1. The King—God bless him: with four times four, drank standing, with all the devotion of loyal and constitutional subjects, the Band playing the National Anthem. The Chairman then proposed the health of the Governor-in-Chief, with this preface:—"As becomes loyal subjects, we have drank His Majesty's health; let us now drink that of our Sovereign's representative in this Province."

2. The Governor in Chief.—March of the 32d Regiment.

The chairman then rose to introduce the principal toasts of the evening, which he did in these words:

"We drink to the health of our honored guest—Andrew Stewart. He has been proscribed for the independence of his opinions, although his talents have ever been devoted to the promotion of every object tending to the glory and welfare of the country. Let it be deeply impressed on the minds of us all, that in our firm support of him, we have suffered no defeat,—on the contrary, we have achieved a great moral triumph. Pledge deep to the health of

3. "ANDREW STUART, who for twenty years, has been the pride of the bar, and the ornament of the Senate." (Three times three and one cheer more.)

Band—"Should auld acquaintance be forgot."

After the enthusiastic cheering produced by this toast had subsided, Mr. Stuart rose to return thanks.

Mr. ANDREW STUART rose and said: From the bottom of my heart, gentlemen, I thank you for the honor you have done me this day. Wealth and what the world calls honors are of small value when compared with the unobtrusive approbation of one's fellow citizens who, however humble our abilities may be or unavailing our efforts for the public good, will not fail to give us credit for zeal and for good intentions when these exist. But Gentlemen, you have a right to expect from me that I should avail myself of this public occasion to express to you succinctly, but plainly,

the views by which I have been guided upon the great public questions now agitating this country. I have ever been an enemy to national distinctions as a passport to personal consideration or political power—subjects of one state we ought as to our civil rights, to be in all things equal. I never have, nor ever will acknowledge any superiority of right of any other kind because of numerical superiority, and I have never been able to understand why the language which a subject of the King derived from his parents, whether that language be English or French, should entitle the one to any pre-eminence over the other. These opinions I maintained in 1810, when it was thought that an undue preponderance was given to the men of English origin over their fellow-subjects of French origin. I did not then expect that I should be subjected to a political proscription for maintaining the same doctrine in 1834, and for claiming an absolute equality of all civil and political rights with the very men who had complained of the proscription of their own at the first mentioned period, for, gentlemen, we must be weak indeed if we allow ourselves so far to be misled as to suppose that the ninety-two resolutions have not as their main object a pre-eminence in the King's subjects of French origin over those of British origin. The tone of that document is contemptuous, and its concluding paragraph seditious. By subscribing to such a flagrant outrage on the British Government, doubtless I might have been suffered to hold an ignominious seat, purchased at the expense of honor and duty, upon the benches of the Assembly; I might have had my name added to the list of those men of British origin, but without any thing British but their names who will condescend to be returned to the next Provincial Parliament, under the patronage of the dominant faction hostile to them and to their blood, and who while they use their names to add to their long majorities, and to give a semblance of British approbation to their wild measures, despise them as heartily and treat them and their opinions with as little consideration as I am disposed to do. They perform the office and have the reward to which belongs to weak and time serving men. Happy for us their numbers are small, their abilities smaller, and their influence none.

Disapproving, however, as I do, the 92 Resolutions, about which so much has been said, and which the framers would have made shorter if they had thought more, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that there is much requiring rectification in the Government of these Colonies; but I believe that there is a power in the Constitution itself to perform all that is requisite to correct internal abuses. I have no interest in defending any of those—I profit by none of them—Native colonists, like myself, suffer as much from these as men of any other origin. It has seemed to me that I saw the dawn of a brighter day arising, which has been again obscured by the dust and smoke raised by indiscreet and factious men. But if we are but true to ourselves, out of this confusion better times will arise. A population of more than 100,000 souls of British origin, united thank God by late events as one band of brothers ought to be, is more than sufficient to regenerate a country whose whole population does not exceed five times that number. It is true, with a certain class of politicians in this country, the names of the British Isles are used as a name of reproach. For my part, I shall never learn to be ashamed of our blood and lineage; nor feel any other sentiment than that of contempt towards the men who can attempt to cast a stigma upon it.—The British Islands want not a defence from my feeble voice, or from any other arms but their own.—I pity the man who can read her history, without feeling his moral energies and patriotism invigorated, and who shall not be disposed in all humility as to himself to say, in shutting those illustrious pages, "AND I TOO AM A BRITON." The imagination of the first of Poets—our own Shakespeare, could hardly reach the loftiness of the subject; when speaking of this accepted Isle—

"This earth of Majesty, this seat of Mars, This other Eden, demi-paradise; This fortress, built by nature for herself, Against infection, and the hand of war; This happy breed of men, this little world; This precious stone set in the silver sea, Which serves in it the office of a wall, Or as a moat defensive to a house, Against the envy of less happier lands; This blessed spot, this earth, this realm, this England, This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings Fear'd by their breed, and famous by their birth, (For christian service and true chivalry,) As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry, Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son;

This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land, Dear for her reputation through the world." And this reputation has been assailed by these men.—Whence then has arisen this daring in certain quarters, this forgetfulness of all the favours conferred upon them by England,—this open bearing of her authority.—Gentlemen, I must speak to you with the same frankness upon this subject as I have tried to do upon others.—It has proceeded from the frequent changes in the Colonial Office, both of persons and policy, and from the want of an efficient system of Colonial Government. So great have been the changes which have taken place within the last half century, that their effects could not but be felt in the Colonies, and a system of government which might have done for the feeble beginnings of the British Colonies after the separation of the old Colonies from the Empire, will not do for its present more advanced condition. In stating this, I, of course, mean not to cast any reproach upon the several gentlemen who have in succession held the office of Secretary of the Colonies. I am too well aware of the difficulties of a Colonial Minister—too well satisfied that the burthen cast upon his shoulders is too great for any man.—Mistaken notions of economy produced the suppression of the Board of Plantations, the plan of which was originally conceived by the great Lord Bacon—and without which there can be no stability, uniformity, or efficiency of action in the Colonial policy of the Empire. But whatever may be the form of that policy, this country cannot be governed by temporizing measures, the true, indeed the only policy of the government, is to be just. When he supported British rights, he understood thereby equal rights to all classes, & no pre-eminence of any class over the men of British origin in this Province—he wished, to use a homely expression to see "Fair Play,"—words, by the bye, which could not be fully rendered in any other language with which he was acquainted. (Mr. John Byrne observed that it was to be found in the Irish.) Mr. Stuart had not the advantage to be acquainted with that ancient language; but would readily believe that as it was to be found in the character, so it would be met with in the language of the earliest inhabitants of modern Europe of which history makes mention. That he was going on to observe, that it was eminently exemplified in the late contest, by the Gentlemen whom he had the honor to address. That he could not fail to remark the steady determination by which their conduct was characterized. He was called upon at the same time to offer a just tribute to the spirit of order, regularity, and sense of right and justice by which that spirit was regulated. Considering the large number of Irishmen already in this country, and the augmentations which are to be looked for from emigration, he had felt peculiar gratification in the circumstances.

Gentlemen, I beg anew to repeat to you my thanks, and to propose to you "The City of Quebec, its prosperity and happiness."

Before proposing the 4th toast, the President said that he would account for the absence of two of the Constitutional Candidates mentioned in the toast, and whose absence, he was sure, every one present would concur with him in regretting. He then read a letter from Mr. Duval, in which that gentleman expressed his regret at being unable to attend the dinner. He also read a communication from George Pemberton, Esq. in which he stated his inability to attend in consequence of severe indisposition.

The 4th toast was then proposed as follows:—

4. "The Constitutional Candidates for the City and County of Quebec, who honor us as guests on this occasion."

(Band playing the Constitutional Air.)

"They, as well as Andrew Stuart, have been proscribed by the unprincipled and dominant party, for holding independent opinions, and we are consequently deprived of their services during the present Parliament; but the day of retribution is at hand, when the raving and short sighted demagogues who have 'sown the wind shall reap the whirlwind.'"

John Neilson, Esq. being called upon to address the Meeting in consequence of this toast, rose and said,

He thought that we had had abundant proofs that it was necessary to preserve the Constitution inviolate.—The moment it is destroyed, there will be an end to all peace and security. We should have nothing to keep our society together. From the moment there is nothing to bind its different parts, it must either fall to pieces, or the different component parts will be dashed against each other. It was from these sentiments that he had acted and always supported the Constitution, and had co-operated with the majority of the Assembly in endeavouring to obtain the redress of grievances by Constitutional means. But he would go no further; and from the moment that he saw a disposition to destroy the Constitution, he said to them,—Gentlemen, you may take that course, but I will not take it; I will not go one step beyond the principles of the British Constitution. We are entitled to all the privileges of British subjects; but we are not entitled to usurp the rights of the King or the other branches of the Legislature.

What is asked by the Assembly, is materially different even from the government of the United States; for theirs is modelled on the British Constitution, as far as circumstances would permit. But the Constitution which is now demanded is only one part of the British system of Government. It would be a government, originating in meetings in different parts, exercising an absolute despotism; in fact, it would be what is generally known by the name of—mob government. He could never support measures tending to advance such a state of things; he had supported what he considered due to the great body of the people. That we have grievances, no one would attempt to deny; but we had perhaps, fewer real grievances than any other people he was acquainted with. It matters not, however, how few they are; if there are any at all, they ought to be redressed; but the way to effect it is not by upsetting the establishment Constitution.

T. A. Young, Esq., then addressed the company.

He conceived that the time is now come when all persons of British origin ought to unite together without reference to minor considerations as our opponents had hitherto done. Measures should be adopted immediately, not only in Quebec and Montreal, but throughout the Province simultaneously, and let the British government know our power. Up to the present moment the Colonial Secretary is not aware of what strength the British population in this Province is possessed. Such being the case, were we called upon one and all no longer to remain in apathy, and although he had always deprecated party feeling, yet, as the other party had forced it on us, he would recommend us not to stop till we succeeded in obtaining our rights. In conclusion, he would propose to drink to the "union of all persons of British origin throughout the Province, and perseverance in the measures which they may adopt." This toast was drank with great enthusiasm.

5th, JAMES STUART—"We honor and respect him for the able, manly and uncompromising defence of his office and character."

Band—"A man's a man for a' that."

6th, The Constitution of the Province, and the 473 Electors who nobly supported its cause at the last Election for the Upper Town."

(Band—"Hearts of Oak.")

7th, "OLD ENGLAND—The pride of her sons, the envy of the world." (Three cheers.)

(Band—"Rule Britannia.") Duet, "O Albion."

8th, "IRELAND—The land of genius, hospitality and valour." (Three cheers.)

(Band—"St. Patrick's day.")

9th, "SCOTLAND—Distinguished for learning, for heroism renowned." (Three cheers.)

(Band—"Here's a health bonny Scotland to thee.")

Mr. Allan Gilmour was called upon on behalf of Scotland, upon which he rose and said that it was with feelings of the greatest satisfaction that he rose to return thanks on behalf of his countrymen, at the same time acknowledging that he was perfectly inadequate to the task. You are all perfectly aware that Scotchmen are with you, and will join the good cause. They may be slow in deciding, but when once they do come forward it is not easy to stop them. We are assembled to do honor to the descendant of a Scotchman, and one whose abilities few men can equal. The whole of the proceedings of that night had raised in him such elevated feelings that he would never forget as long as he lived. Up to the present time he had not participated in public affairs, but he had now come forward with a full conviction that it is high time for every Briton to stand forward. (Tremendous cheering.) He was sure that he would have the support of every Scotchman. In conclusion Mr. G. said that he had nothing more to say to them, but he would sing them an original song which he did in excellent style.

10th, The Emigrant Society.—Air, "Beggar Girl."

When the band had ceased playing, Mr. Molloy was loudly called for, upon which he rose and said: Gentlemen, the toast now drank being connected with benevolence, I presume there can be no difficulty to reply to it, although being called upon at an unprepared moment, to reply to a sentiment so noble in all its bearings. You know, gentlemen, that your fathers, your brothers, your cousins, your friends and acquaintances in military and social life, recollect they have trodden the green field of Waterloo into dust when they entered it, a formidable army under the illustrious Duke of Wellington, and again absorbed its dust with their blood, the portion of those who escaped, and returned to Britain, their home, were met with the heart of joy and welcome—so it is with the poor emigrants, who cross the Atlantic Ocean, to seek a hospitable harbour, to which many of them never arrived, but, like unto Waterloo, are engulfed in its merciless deep; and again like many of those who escaped from the field of Waterloo and were received in Britain with a fostering hand. Now I would ask what fostering hand does the distressed and sea weary emigrant on the shores of Canada meet with—I would ask will the cold flinty rocks or snow covered hills of Canada make to him a warm reception, I answer not. But the hospitable and commercial hands of noble minded and generous hearts who crossed the Atlantic before him, have provided for him a residence, for which every feeling of gratitude should flow in our hearts. Jean Baptiste will ask me what brought me here? I answer I was brought here in one of the wooden walls of Old England. Ah! but who sent for you. D—n me, gentlemen, I say General Wolfe sent for me. (cheers.) But, gentlemen, a friend in need is a friend indeed; and as a proof of this assertion I will refer you to the books of subscription for the relief of distressed emigrants now lying in the Quebec Exchange at this moment; then you will have an ample view of who are the emigrants friends, and I say let this book be viewed by every Irishman, and see who assisted him in the day of tribulation and sickness after a long and dreary passage. Gentlemen, I presume to say that none of you crossed the Atlantic, merely for pleasure, it was to follow honest and honorable pursuits of industry, in which you may long continue to prosper. I have in connection with this subject a toast to propose, which I shall offer after the toasts from the chair are given.

The regular toasts having been gone through, the guests retired, expressing their gratification at the manner in which the evening had been passed. Mr. A. Stuart had previously retired for the purpose of visiting the other parties.

Mr. Patton then proposed the health of the Chairman, with thanks to him for his willingness to take the chair, which he had so ably filled. Mr. J. H. Kerr in returning thanks observed,—

Gentlemen, I feel deeply—very deeply proud of the honor which you have conferred upon me in drinking my health in so flattering a manner. Like yourselves, I have embarked in the great cause of our liberty. We have for a long period been goaded by the rude oppression of those leaders of the Assembly, who have trodden under foot "the immutable principles of justice"—of those who have endeavoured to vilify, and defame and ruin all men of talent and character, who are opposed to their unholy and revolutionary designs. It matters go on as they have been suffered to go, our rights and our liberties will be but a name to scoff at. Let us shake off all apathy—and, if the struggle must come,—why, let it come, and let our motto be—"Right shall not be crushed by might."

The Chairman concluded by alluding to the late unprincipled run upon the Banks of the two Cities. Nothing could more strongly mark the malignant feeling of the leaders of the faction, which had by such means endeavoured to crush the great institutions which had originally been fostered by the Assembly; and gave the following Toast:—"May our Bankers weather the Breakers, and our Merchants always keep to windward of their Bankers."

On Mr. Kerr's leaving the chair, J. C. Fisher, Esq. was called upon to take it. Several songs were sung and many volunteer toasts given. The conviviality of the company was protracted to an early hour in the morning, when the party broke up, highly pleased with the occurrences of the evening, and with the perfect unanimity of feeling which had reigned throughout.

There has not been in Quebec for many years a dinner on the scale of this entertainment, or likely to be longer remembered.

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