

ours, all gloomy and dead. I look backwards and I look on what was the making of Canada.—It was peopled by a few who are now departed.—It had advantages which are now no more.—Before the year 1807, all America flourished in common, from the devastation which war spread over Europe; and when the American Government was so absurd as to resort to embargo and non-importation acts, Canada became, at once the emporium of commerce, and the abode of peace.

Sir, when the words *waste and decay* fell from my pen, the ruins of the Hon. Robert Hamilton's house were full in my view. That house, Sir, was reared and embellished out of the former prosperity of Canada: that house, Sir, used to be the hospitable resort of every Gentleman who visited the Province:—it has welcomed a Royal stranger, and warmed with its wine, the best blood of England. In full confidence that "an indulgent and mild constitution" would remain unsoftened, and that wise laws, for the prosperity and growth of Canada, would never be set aside, the generous founder of that house left provision by his WILL, for maintaining, to the remotest age, the true British hospitality, to which he so nobly gave commencement.—That house, Sir, was seized by our own military, and, by them, burnt down; yet, not a penny has been paid in recompense to its owner; and, so much has confidence in property been shaken that the largest Estate in Canada would find it hard, by credit, to rebuild it. Go, Sir, and enquire of Farmers, if they can find a ready market for their wheat: go to Store-keepers, and ask, if they can get cash for goods:—tell me if land has maintained its price; tell me upon what you rest your hope of safety against being trod under foot by the very republicans of whom you are alarmed. I, Sir, am seriously alarmed, and most seriously anxious to retain this Province to the British nation. Since I crossed the Atlantic, I have seen reasons, which make me, even enthusiastic in the cause; and these reasons, I shall, on a proper occasion unfold. They are founded upon grand and liberal principles, having in view the most extensive benefits, not only to our nation, but to the human race. My first address laid the foundation of my scheme: my second made a pause, till I could ascertain, if there was spirit, in this country, to maintain the dignity of the law, and to preserve the rights of property inviolate. Insure me this, and Canada shall flourish:—insure me this, and it shall go beyond the United States, in prosperity, as the day outshines the night.

Having scanned your own letter, let us now proceed to that, of which you were mean enough to be the humble Carrier.

This letter, is no doubt, the work of your able friend; and it certainly displays more ability than your's: altho' the sum of this ability is wasted on the invention of falsehoods and an artful adjustment of the most malignant insinuations. Regardless of truth, and jealous of reason, your able friend hurries from point to point, and would carry the unsuspecting to his own conclusions; but, whoever calmly questions and compares as he goes along, will stand in no danger of being deceived. The letter bears some indications of a disordered imagination: and the best apology will not hide in it, the ravings of an angry man.

Jealousy, and Envy, and Pride, are the chief movers in this iniquitous production; and their prime object is to stir up kindred passions in the bosom of the reader, against my character & designs. No less than three times do these evil passions wantonly profane the name of Saviour. Mark it well! These were the identical passions which fostered in the breasts of the wicked, when the Saviour of the world blessed it with his instruction, and designed to visit it, with example divine.—Oh! never-ending ill. Oh! human depravity, that will feed for ages on every charitable,—every honest,—every sincere endeavor to ameliorate our condition, and raise us to heaven.

The proud, envious and jealous spirit of your friend, tells me, that I have not only offered myself as the Saviour of the country, but, "in that self-assured character dictated measures, and even words, to its inhabitants." I have told out my mind; and when I shrink from doing so, let it be said that my boasted rights, as a Briton, are tarnished. In utmost sincerity I have assisted my language, to make plain my meaning, by giving a form of a petition; but so far from wishing my words to be used, I have said that "it would be most desirable to see every man, or body of men, using expressions, suitable to his, or their peculiar feeling;" and I now say, using some of your friend's words, that if there is "a few who are now departed," or to be the bearer of an anonymous

libel against the motives of one who appears open before the public.—ask them and listen to their counsel.

If you would desire to be considered an honest man, and the friend of your family, give up the name of the person who has brought you to shame. Do this and apologize for yourself.

Sir, as I am perfectly sincere, and anxious, on account of your family, that no trifling consideration should make you hesitate in doing your duty. I have to beg that you will not slight my advice because I have designated myself "a British Farmer." I became a farmer under no necessity of living by it; and, had I chosen my profession, should have considered myself, with the fortune and influence to which I was born, very unlucky, at this time of life, had I not been higher on the British Staff than you.

You hinted in conversation, that, I had borrowed some of my sentiments from one of my friends, and it has been rumored that I am merely the mouth-piece of a party. Nothing can be more untrue. I began my statistical enquiries in Canada and decided as to the false step of Governor Gore, before I arrived at this place, among my friends, I have all along acted so as to shield them from responsibility, on my account; and, they have aided me so little, that at this hour I have not been furnished with a Report of this Township, in which so many of them reside.

The Magistrates of this Township were the first to recommend my scheme, and I did them the honor to consent to their care what I had begun; but they met and seemed afraid of telling what they thought in answer to my 31<sup>st</sup> query: and here the matter rests, Sir, I suppose, it is known how the wind blows. A worthy Magistrate of the London District was more candid with me. He frankly said, that they (in his Township) would have answered this query more fully "if they had dared;" and, I know that in Niagara one man clenched his fist, and another showed his claws, in opposition.

Sir, for ten years I have stood by myself the supporter of very lofty principles in Britain. It has been my uniform maxim to do all I can, as an individual, but never to connect myself with party, in politics. After I had done with schools and colleges, I spent fifteen months travelling over England to inform myself as to its arts and agriculture. During this time, now 17 years ago, I was employed for some months by Government to make enquiry into the means of bettering the condition of the English poor. I demonstrated the principle with which I was charged, and the adoption of that principle, with modifications, would have saved millions of money and increased the comfort of millions of human beings. My employers shrunk from the principle, after it was proved; but I was not so easily moved. After keeping my eye upon it for eight years, residing in Scotland, as a farmer, upon my Father's estate, I removed into England, and, taking a farm there, became Overseer of the Poor, and went through the whole detail of parish management, that I might be master of my subject, in practice, as well as in theory. After five years experience in this situation, finding my ideas becoming mature, I began to publish little tracts, signed and dated, from time to time, chiefly to manifest constancy to the object I had in view. These were continued in the third year, and a month before I left home, I had a Petition, bearing nearly a hundred signatures, presented to Parliament, to bring forward my scheme in a formal and serious manner. This Petition, Sir, was kept out of sight as much as possible by powerful influences, but I am not the man to desert a great cause, where I know I am right, and as soon as I return home it shall be advanced by further endeavors. It is part of my present plan to make Canada, at once beneficial to the English poor, and a valuable extension of the British empire.

Now, Sir, as I have exhibited motives which I would not otherwise have done had I not been pushed to it by your narrow-minded and vile accusations, it becomes perfectly natural for me to suspect yours; and, equally fair, to give the public a clue by which they may account for the zeal in the cause you have espoused.

To your able friend I give the merit of the plot. An anonymous letter could not answer his purpose by itself. He knew your weakness, pointed out advantages in the game, flattered you into the conceit that you could write a letter, and prevailed with you to give your full address at *Niagara Falls*, which would mark you from the furthest corner of the earth. Having thus made you his cat-spaw, and got your letter and his printed in the same newspaper, it became an easy matter to enclose this in a blank cover and direct it to Major Halton, agent for Upper Canada, London. Major H., in duty

bound to Governor Gore for having secured to him a good £500 a year out of the taxes of Canada, would lose no time, on receipt, in running to Governor Gore. The Governor would say, My dear Major, write off instantly to *Richard Leonard, Drummond Hill, Niagara Falls*. Tell him that I am inexpressibly obliged to him for having so manfully taken my part and stood in the way of enquiry. Tell him that I have now more power over the good things of the Province than ever; and, that I will do any thing to favour him. Tell him that he has only to send me the number of any reserve in any Township, not located, and an order for it shall be sent him from home; or, if he is a half-pay Officer, and would like to be a Colonel in the Militia, or an inspecting General, that I could help him to that. Desire Leonard to make enquiry and find out, if possible, who the Lord Holder is who writes for me in the same paper so ably; and, ascertain, if he would accept of any favour. He is the very man for us; and no unoccupied Post or Reserve shall be refused, if they but notify to us, privately, from time to time, what is going on, and of what they stand in need. Adieu, Sir.

CANADIANS!—The paper will admit of my saying but a few words to you. Review all that has been written,—think, and act for yourselves, like men. Let every one send in a Petition for enquiry; or, cease to complain of unpaid claims and every thing else.—My own petition was sent off last week to York to be presented to the Legislative Council, as well as to the Assembly. I am told they will not receive it: be it so: I do my duty, and shall rest contented. Perhaps members are puffed with what I said of their conduct last year; but judge how far I was right by their own language since they last met.—"Your Honor's communication to us of the intention of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to apply the proceeds of the estates vested in His Majesty under the provisions of the Statute to defray certain persons therein described, aliens, to compensate the loss of individuals by the invasion of the enemy, affords us a strong and gratifying proof of the gracious consideration of His Royal Highness for those of His Majesty's faithful subjects who suffered in the late contest." Surely, members of Assembly will blush when they reflect on this adulatory language, which makes His Majesty's faithful subjects, at once denigrate His Majesty, and wrong themselves. Men in certain situations forget themselves, unless urged on by other men; and the wisdom of the British constitution provides the means of doing this in the right of petitioning. How noble would it be, were members of Assembly, voluntarily, to rise above their weakness!

Gentlemen! I lie under no pledge to you, but to publish your Reports in England, and I will honorably redeem this pledge. Your Township Reports shall be faithfully published; but you cannot expect a single man to come to Canada, for the purchase of land, if security in property remains doubtful, and if the laws are to be at the mercy of every impetuous Governor. The Reports will be valuable at home, because they will prove the advantage of emigrating; but a choice will remain of coming here or going to the States. The principle of allegiance which I maintain is perfectly sound. If not, the British Government has been stealing men from all the nations of the earth for the last four-score years.—If not, many thousands of good people in the United States are liable to be hung the moment they set foot on British ground.—If not, a full half of the adult population of Upper Canada have perjured themselves, and may be fairly put to death whenever they cross the American frontier.

The law and practice upon this principle, I have told you, are not sufficiently defined; and, now, that all nations are at peace, is the very moment to get them settled. It is a duty which nations owe to individuals to define and settle these: and it is the duty of individuals to call upon nations to do so.

In this part of the world, of all others, it is important, that every thing should be clear on this head. Here, for many hundreds of miles, two nations, sprung from the same stock, speaking the same language, governed by the same laws, ruled by the same customs, assimilated by the same manners, and connected, in a thousand ways, by the endearing ties of relationship, are closely in contact. Good God! is the narrow boundary between two such christian nations to flame with eternal hate? Is the independent spirit of man to be confined by the accident of birth? are we to have no law by which, in safety, we may change our abode,—drawn from home by some

darling incentive; or, driven, perhaps, from the place of our nativity, before the whirlwind of oppression?

My principle of allegiance, Canadians, rests upon a more refined and stable basis than an oath;—upon duty, upon affection, upon the sense of obligations received. These sentiments hold nations together more firmly than any oath; and, they are sentiments of which we need not be ashamed, when we come into the presence of him, who hath said, "*swear not at all.*"

ROBERT GOURLAY.

POSTSCRIPT.

The following Petition, together with a similar one, addressed to the Legislative Council, were sent by me, last week, to York, in a letter to the Honorable Thomas Clark, requesting him to present the latter to the Council, and to give the other to a member of Assembly, for presentation to that body. A letter just received from Mr. Clark, dated, York, 23<sup>d</sup> inst. informs me, that, he will neither present the one, nor give the other to be presented, because, he differs from me in opinion, and thinks, I have done wrong.

This is a most serious matter, and must be explained. Last year, at this time, the right of petitioning was argued more seriously in the British Parliament than at any former period. It was allowed that no Petition could be refused presentation, which was expressed in becoming language; and I have seen a member in our House of Commons present a Petition, stating that he did so, in duty to his constituents, although he differed from them in the opinions which the Petition expressed.

It is perfectly plain, that, under such a system as the Borough-mongering system of England, or the Canadian system of patronage and favoritism, our right of petitioning, secured to us by the Bill of Rights, would not be worth having, if it rested with the will of members of Parliament. It is plain that under the free exercise of this right no British subject can honestly rebel against Government. When he thinks things are wrong, it is his duty to express his opinion, by petitioning; and as soon as a majority of his fellow subjects adhere together in petitioning for any one object, it must, of necessity, be carried.

I ask the inhabitants of Upper Canada to examine my petition, word by word. I am not conscious of a single one being out of place. I express my opinion as to enquiry, and ask for an opportunity of proving what I allege to be true. If my request is granted and I fail in my proof, it will quiet the public mind. If I am denied, it must settle the point, that complaints are well grounded, and that certain people "love darkness rather than light, their deeds being evil."

I now notify, that, my Petitions will be given by Mr. Clark to any member of the Council or Assembly who offers to do the duty of presenting them respectively, and let them that do so be styled the most worthy.

I am in some hope that my Honorable friend, Mr. Clark, will, himself, come alive to his duty, and, remember what the Poet says:

Honor and shame from no condition rise:  
Act well your part, there all the honor lies.  
R. G.

To The Honorable, the Commons of Upper Canada, in Parliament Assembled.

The Humble Petition of Robert Gourlay, Esquire,

SHEWETH:

That your Petitioner is a British Subject; and, a proprietor of land, in Upper Canada.

That, your Petitioner came to this Province, to enquire into the state of his property; and, to ascertain, whether, he could advantageously settle here.

That your Petitioner has found his property greatly depreciated, owing to the suspension of law, a general maladministration of affairs, and, the violation of public faith.

That, your Petitioner first discovered, that public faith was violated, at the new settlement of Perth, when he was there, the first week of July last.

That your Petitioner then conceived, that such violation arose out of some misunderstanding, between the Home and Provincial Government:—that, in this belief, and expecting to get speedily back to England for explanation, he not only endeavored, to soothe the minds of the settlers, but sent home a favourable Report of the settlement, which has since been published, there, in the newspapers.

That, your Petitioner, having recently made an extensive Tour in the western parts of the Province, has had occasion to discover, that violation of public faith was complained of by many, in these parts; and, that a very general spirit of discontent and dependency prevailed throughout.

bound to Governor Gore for having secured to him a good £500 a year out of the taxes of Canada, would lose no time, on receipt, in running to Governor Gore. The Governor would say, My dear Major, write off instantly to *Richard Leonard, Drummond Hill, Niagara Falls*. Tell him that I am inexpressibly obliged to him for having so manfully taken my part and stood in the way of enquiry. Tell him that I have now more power over the good things of the Province than ever; and, that I will do any thing to favour him. Tell him that he has only to send me the number of any reserve in any Township, not located, and an order for it shall be sent him from home; or, if he is a half-pay Officer, and would like to be a Colonel in the Militia, or an inspecting General, that I could help him to that. Desire Leonard to make enquiry and find out, if possible, who the Lord Holder is who writes for me in the same paper so ably; and, ascertain, if he would accept of any favour. He is the very man for us; and no unoccupied Post or Reserve shall be refused, if they but notify to us, privately, from time to time, what is going on, and of what they stand in need. Adieu, Sir.

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