

**LOWER CANADA
AT
THE CLOSE OF 1837**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649235322

Lower Canada at the Close of 1837 by Anonymous

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Cover @ 2017

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ANONYMOUS

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With the Author's Consent.

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AT

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LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1838.

81. from Stearns & Skiles.

£ 1 10 0.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.



LOWER CANADA,

AT THE CLOSE OF 1837.

ON the eve of an adjournment for its Christmas holidays, a dark account came to disturb the Parliament, and to mingle with seasonable festivities the thoughts of sad events: of flaming villages, of unhoused families seeking the wintry shelter of the forest, and of corpses slain in civil war and stretched upon the snows of Canada.

For thirty years the differences which at last are come to this issue have been continually growing and breaking forth; for the last ten years they have been under the view of Parliament; addresses,

pétitions, agents, and delegates from the adverse parties in the province have gone before Secretaries of State and Committees of the House of Commons ; governors and administrators, military and civil, have been sent out and have been recalled in frequent succession ; commissioners have made inquiries and reports ; no variety of interlocutory decree has been refused by the varying Cabinets of the period : the most recent is the appointment of a Guardian ; and the province is put under the care of the Commander of the Forces, and of some additional regiments of the line. It was not before it was wanted that this order was made ; but though it be the latest, it is not final judgment, and the execution of it, even for an interval, requires some consideration.

To some of the Queen's Ministers no faint applause is due in the present state of parties, for the manly and loyal spirit with which they have at once declared in Parliament, that rebellion shall be quelled : but the circumstances are melancholy and

complicated, and the silent crying of the dead, and the imminent perils of the living, have appealed the cause from Ministers, not to Parliament alone, but to the people; nay, to Europe and America: whilst the fate of a body of troops; of the inhabitants of Montreal and Quebec, of the French Canadian race; the power of the Cabinet, and, consequently, the policy of the kingdom; the destinies of the North American Provinces;—seem to be dependent on the degree of firmness and wisdom with which the progress of mischief may be arrested, or the first steps may be taken into that area of politics and war on the dim and bloody threshold of which so many are now standing.

The leading Members and the Speaker of the House of Assembly, men with whom the Governors of Canada have associated both in public and in private intercourse, and whom they have been wont to accost with measured courtesy and to hear with apparent deference, are proclaimed as traitors, are lying in prison under capital ac-

cusations, are driven from their country, or have fallen in conflict with the Queen's troops. The possessions and fortunes of the merchants of both the Canadas—of the commercial, the banking, and the land companies, are staked upon the hazards of a struggle which the less decided party of the Constitutionals at Quebec will deplore with a profound regret, in whatever way it may result; for, now, it cannot end without having involved in ruin many with whom either lately or formerly, they have acted as members of the same political party, and whom they have numbered amongst their friends. The simple and happy race of French Canadian yeomanry have stood deluded and maddened on the edge of battle with an English general and army; whilst their homes, and those of British emigrants, and of the Canadians of British descent, to whom the province has become a father-land, have been exposed to the cruel and uncertain events of civil war.

Of the grounds for the arrests and of

the truth of the accusations that have been made in Lower Canada, it would be unjust and wicked to pronounce any decided opinion at this distance from the vicinage. The whole must depend upon the conclusions as to intention, which are to be drawn from facts, by minds not only impartial, but familiar with the circumstances on which the character of the facts must depend. Unauthorized assemblages and trainings of armed men, for any continuance, are evidence of the existence somewhere of treasonable thoughts and designs; but the particular application and conclusiveness of that evidence as to the intentions of any individual cannot be accurately perceived across the Atlantic, and may be qualified by relations between his acts and those of others, and by the state of the society in which both have taken place. All America, at the least, will sit in judgment upon the tribunals by which the questions of Canadian treason may be tried; and all her North American Provinces are not of so much im-