

# Between the Times of War

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BY

**Dr. J. M. HARPER**

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Canada has more than entered upon its greatest of growing times, though many of us may be too busy over our bread-and-butter operations to consider how history is only repeating itself for us for the moment. Between the Revolutionary War, which threatened to wean American colonists from their allegiance to Great Britain, and the American War of 1812, which brought about a quickening of patriotism to Canadians, there lapsed a period of a little less than forty years, just as since Confederation there has lapsed about the same number of years for us of the present generation. The hinterland of our country was then what is now called the Province of Ontario, just as the hinterland of our country is now the great North-West. Then, it was a time of filling in by immigration, just as it is now, with the fertility of the soils to the west of us as the great attraction—a preliminary harvesting of the finest of timber from the woodlands of Upper Canada, to be followed by a settling down to the independent calling of the farmer and a regular civilized way of living, just as now are being reaped overflowing harvests on the western wheat-lands, to be followed by commercial evolutions in which the roughnesses of primal colonization times are to disappear. The great waterway of the St. Lawrence was then to what was the hinterland of Canada in its colonizing endeavours, as the Canadian Pacific Railway has been to the great West, soon to be supplemented for the opening up of the country by

other transcontinental railway systems. And should we wish to round out the analogy, it may be as well to remember that these changes of more than a century ago were taking place while the French Revolution was maturing its renovating forces to the dethronement of the Capets, just as now our present growing time is maturing in presence of another kind of a revolution in France, almost as momentous in its character as was that at the close of the eighteenth century, having for its object the severance of traditional alliances between church and state.

By the time Sir Guy Carleton returned to Canada as Lord Dorchester in 1787, the tide of immigration had fully set in, from the east and south—the bulk of the newcomers being United Empire Loyalists. Previous to this time, the history of the city of Quebec had been the history of the country. And, when one wanders in and out among its modern civic improvements, the desire comes uppermost for the most part, to learn what the place looked like after having been sacked by Wolfe and threatened by Montgomery, with perhaps a side wish to trace, as I would this evening with the co-operation of the Rev. Mr. Clark, the status of our Protestant forerunners, during that fateful period of the very earliest interblending of French and British influences in the building up of the city.

The town was in a pitiable plight after that almost continuous attack for months by General James Wolfe. When the memorable siege of 1759 began, there were only about nine thousand of a militant and non-militant population in the place; and, when it was over, these poor people, sadly reduced in number, were in a state of abject poverty, until some settled way of earning a livelihood had been provided for them in the rebuilding of the town and the revival of trade. There were few of the houses along the lines of the streets, and none of the churches or public edifices that did not bear scars from the shot and shell of the invaders. The thoroughfares were lumbered and encumbered with all kinds of debris, and all but impassible save to foot passengers. Hundreds of the residences were barely inhabitable, the rich and poor huddling anywhere for shelter as after a great fire or an earthquake. The places of worship were overthrown or gutted. Trade was completely demoralized. In a word, poor old Quebec was a city that had to be rebuilt

almost from its very foundations, if it was ever again to hold up its head with pride as the permanent capital of the country.

To indulge in particulars, the little church of Notre Dame des Victoires, which every visitor still pays court to for what it commemorates, was all but a complete wreck. The Basilica and Bishop's Palace had not much more than their walls standing, the Bishop and his vicaire having to make a lodging house for themselves of the Seminary's kitchen. All that remained of the Intendant's Palace were its gaunt crumbling walls, windowless and begrimed with smoke. The chapels of the Recollets, the Jesuits, and the Seminaries were unfit for public worship to be held in them, and even the hospitals bore marks of the besiegers' activity.

And, when it is remembered that only sixteen years had been devoted to the restoration of the town, when Montgomery and Arnold came along to put violent hands on it again—before the fortifications were satisfactorily breach-proof, or the routine of living had been able to draw an easy breath after getting back to its business habits—was it any wonder that old James Thompson, the Citadel Engineer, and his men had to work night and day in patching up the approaches to the town, against the American invaders? Meantime, it has to be said, the public activities in connection with the rebuilding of the town and the preparations for the threatened siege, brought into the place many new residents, to the doubling of the population and the extending of the town proper into the suburbs of St. John and St. Roch.

And what of the Protestant section of the population at this time? At the date of the taking of the city, General Murray tells us that there were not more than nineteen Protestant families in the outer parishes of Quebec; and we wish he had gone further to tell us how many were in the town itself. He certainly had no very high opinion of some of the non-Catholic residents, whatever their number was, including as they did, traders, mechanics, halfpay officers, and disbanded soldiers. All these he candidly tells us—and we seem to be reading of the earliest days of the Klondyke and the Cobalt region, from his narrative—all these had their fortunes yet to make and were not very solicitous about the means to be adopted to gain such an end.

“I report them to be in general,” he does not hesitate to say, “the most immoral collection of men I ever knew—little calculated to make His Majesty’s new subjects enamoured of our laws, religion, and customs, and little adapted to enforce these laws which are to govern.”

As far back as 1754, complaints had to be sent to France concerning the increase in the number of Protestant settlers in Canada. And a royal order was issued that a census should be taken of all such, giving the names, professions, the condition of their families, the time they had resided in the country and the character of their conduct as citizens. The same order counselled the Canadian authorities to expel all Protestants of foreign extraction from the country at once, the French Protestants to be dealt with by the Roman Catholic Bishop as he deemed best.

The records of that census, if it ever was made, would have been pertinently invaluable, at this probing into the very beginnings of a British interblending of interests in Canada social and commercial. Possibly Dr. Doughty, our keen-eyed archivist, may yet come across it. All that is further known of its possible existence is that, four years after the King’s order had been issued to have it made, his Majesty desired to be informed, in his perplexity over counter reports from Canada, of the disposition and acts of the Protestant population in his trans-Atlantic possessions; he having been informed by the Bishop that their behaviour was anything but satisfactory, and by the Intendant that no complaints of any consequence had been made against them. The statement of Bigot, who, by the way, as everybody knows, was anything but morally fit to pass an opinion that was worth much, is quite explicit in its way. These religious dissentients, he claims, were peaceably submissive to the laws and the police, and were not given to hold any meetings as a set-off to their non-attendance at church, or as a disloyal interruption to public affairs. Moreover, as he further says, they have fourteen trading houses which carry on three parts of the trade of the country, and if they were to be driven out of the colony, the interests of the Province would greatly suffer, seeing the merchants of French origin are by no means numerous nor sufficiently rich to meet all emergencies. In a word, Bigot’s despatch to the home au-

thorities ends quite diplomatically, if not humorously. "I will make out a list of the Protestants of foreign nationality" he says, "*if I can find any.*"

And it is well to remember Bigot's report concerning the Protestant or non-Catholic merchants of Quebec, while trying to locate the very earliest development of a Protestant interest in the place. The merchants of Lower Town were for the most part, even up to immediate pre-Confederation times, adherents to Protestantism directly or indirectly; and, when the colony came into British hands, steps were taken to secure a stated clergyman of the Protestant faith to look after the spiritual health of those of that persuasion.

From what is known, it is safe to say that the harvest was sadly in need of being cared for. There was much pioneering to be undertaken in bringing about a settled state of affairs, ethical, social and political, up to the time when Montgomery and Arnold came knocking at the gates of the town for admittance. The first demand for improvement came from the merchants of Lower Town, who were anything but pleased at the low intellectual standing and moral character of many of the men who had been authorized through British agencies, to assume the offices of state administration. The civilizing agencies, that spring naturally from a permanency of living amid the routines of life, had been getting in their work, silently and continuously as they always do, between the times of war and political unrest. There is a gospel of harmony being preached all the time by the communal interest. The merchant of Lower Town had not at this period overmuch, perhaps, of the highest morality and respectability to boast of; but he none the less took it ill that, instead of men of talent and a fair degree of respectability of character, the very reverse were appointed to the most important of the political offices of the colony. It has been said that one of the judges appointed to try criminal cases had been a jail-bird himself, ignorant and illiterate, and utterly incapable of administering the laws of the land. Many of the offices had been filled through the issue of letters-patent to certain loose fish of the court life of St. James, only to be sub-let to even looser fish who had not the manners of a coxswain or a cowboy. And it was no doubt on this account that not a few of the citizens of Quebec were to be found thinking that it would be no very serious loss to

the community in point of morality nor of trading respectability, were the colony to fall a prey to the American invaders.

Whether King George had cognizance of the blending that had to be provided for in Quebec under such adverse circumstances, during this earliest of growing times under British rule in Canada, as our King Edward has no doubt had of the blending that has been started, and has yet to be accomplished, among the thousands crowding for a home out West, it is not for any one to say. But it is certain that Lord Dorchester, during his governor-generalship received definite instructions, as if direct from his royal master, "that in order to suppress every species of vice, profaneness, and immorality in the colony, he forthwith should cause to be put in force all laws already enacted against blasphemy, adultery, polygamy, profanation of the Lord's Day, and drunkenness in every part of the province." Nay, from what follows in the full body of the message, it looks as if reports, all but as uncomplimentary as General Murray's, had reached government circles in London, referring to the unsettled condition of morality and social order in the city and in the townships adjoining, before any Protestant church had been built anywhere in the province.

"It is also the will and pleasure of the king" says the order in question, "that you do direct the constables and churchwardens of the several parishes to make presentment on oath of any of the vices before mentioned to the Justices of the Peace in session, or to any other of the temporal courts; that effectual laws be provided for the restraint and punishment of the said vices, when new laws are required or present laws are found to be insufficient: and that you appoint no person to be a Justice of the Peace or to any Crown Trust or employment whose notoriously ill life or conversation may occasion scandal." From such a glimpse of affairs as has been given in this short article it can readily be seen how interesting a study there is in the annals of this period between the times of war, from 1759 to 1812.

The turn in the tide of Protestant evangelistic developments in Quebec had not been fully reached, it is needless to say, until arrangements had been made for the erection of

a Scottish Kirk and an Anglican Cathedral. And this turn in events seems to have been reached by fire.

Quebec has been visited from time to time by calamitous fires. The destruction by fire of the Chapelle de la Recouvrance, built by Champlain himself, led to the erection of our present Basilica, and it was also a fire that led to the erection of our present Anglican Cathedral, within the precincts of the old Church and Monastery of the Franciscan Brotherhood of the Recollets.

It was in 1796 that these two buildings were destroyed by the devouring element. A careless negro stable-boy had been philandering one day with gun-powder in his master's barn, that adjoined the garden of the Recollets. The barn was soon in flames, and finally a fagot from the burning outbuilding lodged in the belfry of the chapel near by. Every effort was made by the Recollets, assisted by the clergy of the adjacent Presbytery, to save the sacred edifice, but all without avail. The few members of the unfortunate Recollets—all that remained of a once flourishing mission—were thrown out on the world homeless. They had no means of rebuilding. And, when the order in Canada was finally broken up, their lands were handed over to the Governor-General as escheat to the Crown.

For a time, in terms of a royal edict, the Anglican Church in Canada was within the jurisdiction of one sole and supreme ecclesiastic, namely, the Bishop of Nova Scotia. In 1793 Lord Dorchester returned to Canada, this time bringing out his wife and family to reside in Quebec. And in the same year, and about the same time of the year—the last week in September—Dr. Jacob Mountain also arrived with his family in the Ancient Capital. With a resident governor and bishop, and the social influences begotten of the etiquette of colonial state, and ecclesiastical restraint, Quebec began to reach out towards something a little in advance of the bird-of-passage way of living. And we all know how reaching out towards respectability gives a wholesome tendency towards the moral and church-going habit.

The early experiences of the good Bishop Mountain, unexpected as many of them must have been to a prelate just arrived from England—are fully recorded in his memoirs. For eleven years he had to content himself with very inferior

accommodation for the holding of public worship, agreeing, it is said, with the Recollets, to share with them their chapel, which was situated where the Court House of Quebec now stands. After the burning down of the buildings belonging to the order of the Recollets and the disbanding of that brotherhood in Canada, the property, which now includes the spacious courtyard of the Anglican Cathedral, was escheat to the Crown; and thus it came about that the present building was erected on these grounds at the expense of the British Government, and vested in the hands of the Anglicans of Quebec and their first Bishop. Thus was a first step taken to give Protestantism "a local habitation and place," within the precincts of the *Ancient Capital*, alongside of whatever results had been realized through the missionary efforts of the Rev. George Henry, the Presbyterian military chaplain, who was the Rev. Dr. Spark's immediate predecessor, and of the Presbyterian enterprise of erecting old St. Andrews. The Rev. Mr. Clark of Chalmers Church is to follow me this evening, in giving an account of the labours of the Rev. Dr. Spark, and the earliest movements in connection with the Presbyterian interest in Quebec; and it may not be out of place for me to say, that when Dr. Jacob Mountain arrived in Quebec in 1793, he found Mr. Brooke, an Anglican Missionary, labouring in the field. Indeed, before his arrival there had been no less than three Anglican pastors labouring successively in Quebec—the last of whom, the Rev. Mr. Toosey, having been appointed Rector of the parish by the Bishop of Nova Scotia, four years before Bishop Mountain was nominated Bishop of Quebec.

The residents of to-day in Quebec can gauge fairly well the religious life of the city from the sympathies among the churches and their prosperity. Fennings Taylor tells us that "the Anglican Bishop was met, on his arrival, by the Gallican Bishop, who made him welcome with a kiss on both cheeks." This goes to indicate that there was to be peace among the churches of Quebec, with no restraint to be put upon Protestant denominationalism; and the fact remains that six years after the opening of the Anglican Cathedral, the Presbyterians had built St. Andrew's Church in 1810, and St. John's Church as well in 1815, while the Methodists opened their first meeting-house in 1817. The times were growing. Quebec was a busy garrison town,



with its walls and gateways still at the building and rebuilding and the lumber trade and ship-building industry at their earlier activity. Indeed, one would like to know something of the personality of the church-goers who were present at Cathedral inauguration services of 1804, when the Bishop was presented with the letters-patent which made over to him and his co-religionists the property of the disbanded Recollects. The population of the place at the time numbered fifteen thousand or so. The wealth of the city, outside of the Church property was, for the most part, in the hands of the military, the government officials and the few lumber merchants and master shipbuilders. Quebec was still in large measure a community of transiency; and yet there was a foresight worthy of the highest admiration in the project of erecting a large and substantial edifice suitable for these hundred years that have since transpired—an edifice which, with sundry renovations and additions, such as the Rectory, All Saint's Chapel, and the Church Hall, presents to-day the massive architectural aspects of a Cathedral Church, a monument of the influence of the English-speaking citizens of Quebec during the growing period between the times of war of 1759 and 1812.

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