



23. Baines

TREMAINE 2034

(R. Baines)

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH CANADA?

A FORMIDABLE insurrection in Lower Canada presents to this country the afflictive prospect of another war with its Colonies. The principal facts of the insurrection, and of the deplorable bloodshed which has already taken place, and the important debate on the subject in the House of Commons, on Friday, December 22, will be found reported at considerable length in the newspapers. We request the calm and thoughtful attention of our readers to the facts we shall state, and the considerations we shall present to them, on this deeply important and difficult subject.

The mention of a rebellion in any part of her Majesty's dominions, suggests immediately to loyal Englishmen the idea that it must be put down by force. Such is evidently the intention of her Majesty's Ministers; and, as far as we can perceive, such is the impulse of both Whigs and Tories in Parliament,—of most of the newspapers representing those parties, and of a considerable and influential portion of the public. Not a doubt seems to be expressed in many quarters, that the "insulted majesty" of the country must be vindicated, and the troublesome and violent Canadians coerced by the sword.

If the American revolution had never occurred, our feelings and opinions might possibly have been the same. But with the terrible lesson presented by that shameful portion of our history strongly before us, we feel that the determination to *subdue* Canada ought not to be taken without the gravest deliberation.

We need not inform our readers that we supported the resolutions proposed by Ministers in the early part of the present year, refusing the demands of the Canadian House of Assembly, for such a change in their Constitution as would have clearly amounted to independence; and authorising the Government to take out of the Canadian Exchequer the sums requisite to pay the judicial and other officers of Government, from whom the House of Assembly had withheld their salaries for more than three years. Whether we were right or wrong in supporting this course, is of little consequence. If wrong, we should not hesitate for a moment to acknowledge it. We acted under the impression, that the demand of an *elective* council (or Upper House of Legislature) in Canada, was a *disguised* demand of *independence*: that it would have deprived her Majesty of all real power and support in that country; and we thought then, and think still, that it would be far better to release the Canadians entirely from our dominion, than to keep the *name* and the *expense* of sovereignty without the *substance*. But as independence was not then asked for, we thought the demand of an elective council fraudulent, and that it ought to be resisted. That resistance, however, and the seizing of the public revenues of the Canadians without the sanction of the House of Assembly (which sanction is required by the Canadian Constitution, given by Parliament in 1791), have led the people of Lower Canada to take up arms, and to fight openly for independence, as the only safeguard of their liberties. Thus the question is changed—the mask is dropped—the Canadians now demand openly what before they demanded only in disguise; and the question is put fairly and broadly before the British Parliament and people—*Shall Great Britain consent to the independence of Canada?* To this question we are not prepared to give a negative.

We doubt the *right* of England to coerce the Canadians. We doubt her *power* to do it. We more than doubt the *advantage* of holding Canada under military subjugation.

Let us briefly sketch the history of Canada. It was settled as a French colony in the year 1604, and continued for nearly a century and a half annexed to France. In 1759, during the Seven Years' War, England gained possession of

Quebec; and in 1763, the whole province of Canada was ceded to this country. Till the year 1774, the colony was governed without a Constitution; in that year a very imperfect Constitution was given; consisting of a Legislative Council of twenty-three members, to be appointed by the Crown. But in 1791 a much freer Constitution was granted by Parliament; the proprietors of the soil were allowed to choose representatives, eighty-three in number, who were to form the House of Assembly (or Canadian House of Commons), and to act in a legislative capacity in conjunction with an Upper House, called the Legislative Council, originally composed of fifteen members, and now of nearly twice that number, nominated by the Crown. The Executive Government consisted of the Governor and an Executive Council, both appointed by the Crown—the Executive Council answering to our Privy Council. Such continues to be the form of government to the present time. The Catholic religion, being that of the inhabitants of French descent, is established in Canada by Act of Parliament.

Since the colony came under the British dominion, a considerable number of English, Scotch, and Irish have settled in Lower Canada, and a greater number in Upper Canada; but in the Lower province the French population still forms a great majority. Mr. M'Gregor, in his work on British North America, estimates the population of Lower Canada at 580,000 in 1832: it must now exceed 600,000; and of these 450,000 are French, and 150,000 British and Irish; the proportion of Catholics is about four-fifths of the whole population. On the same authority, the population of Upper Canada, is stated at 310,000 in 1832: it may now amount to 400,000, nearly the whole of whom are British and Irish.* Of the British inhabitants of Lower Canada, a considerable number live in the cities of Quebec and Montreal, and these are either connected with the government, or are merchants and tradesmen: the emigrants are scattered about the country.

A mere glance at the form of government in Canada will show an extraordinary anomaly. A high degree of constitutional liberty is given by the enjoyment of representation on a wide basis, with elections every four years: but one branch of the legislature and the whole of the executive are in the hands of the British minority, who have no sympathy with the bulk of the population, or with the House of Assembly. Nothing can be more natural than that the government, with a view to strengthen the British interest in the colony, should appoint nearly all the members of the Legislative and Executive Councils from among the British; and, alas! nothing can be more natural than that all the patronage of the colony should be distributed by the home and the colonial governments on a system of favouritism, and that this should lead to the most improper appointments, to much jobbing, and to the formation of a British faction, hating and hated by the French Canadians. The House of Assembly, on the other hand, is almost exclusively composed of the popular or French Canadian party. Thus the legislature is divided betwixt the majority and the minority of the population,—betwixt French and British,—betwixt Catholic and Protestant. One branch is half-popular, the other anti-popular; but the Executive is quite irresponsible, and exclusive in its character. Here are the most discordant materials of government put together. The natural consequence is dissension; and this has been realized to the largest extent. The system produces haughtiness, corruption, and indifference in the officials; and these excite the liveliest discontent in the members of the representative body, who have the utmost *liberty of discussion*, but *no power to do any thing* without the Council. When we add to the above causes of dissension the difference in race, in language, and in religion, and when we remember the close contiguity of the

* The population of all the British Provinces in North America is thus given by Mr. M'Gregor:—

Lower Canada.....	580,000
Upper Canada..	310,000
New Brunswick	110,000
Nova Scotia	196,000
Prince Edward's Island.....	34,000
Newfoundland and Labrador	76,000

Total1,307,000

Canadians with that great republic, whose population shook off our yoke, and now enjoy a high degree of liberty and prosperity, we shall hardly be surprised if the French Canadians have become disgusted with British domination, and are longing to form an independent republic.

The dissensions between the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council in Lower Canada began about the year 1820. The Canadians soon after sent a great number of Petitions to the British Parliament, complaining of grievances and praying redress; and in 1828 a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed, whose report showed that many of the complaints were well founded. Attempts were made to redress the grievances, but with the feebleness and inefficiency which generally characterise the efforts of a government at home to reform the administration of a distant colony. The House of Assembly, under the violent guidance of M. Papineau and others, became impatient of the continual thwarting of the Governor and the Council. The Canadians were not oppressed; they paid no taxes; they enjoyed civil and religious liberty; they had almost the monopoly of the British market for their timber. But they were governed by those who had no sympathy with them: they were tantalized by having a House of Assembly, with free discussion, but without power: they complained that improper and corrupt persons were appointed judges: the House of Assembly claimed a right to appropriate to the public service, according to its own discretion, the whole of the revenues of the crown accruing within the province, including those produced by the sale of timber and waste lands, all fines and forfeitures, and the income from seigniorial rights; and the resistance of these claims by the Council irritated the House of Assembly and their constituents. The grant of lands by the British Parliament to the Canadian Company and the North American Land Company was also complained of by the Assembly, "as an unnecessary interference with the authority of the local legislature over the internal affairs of the province."

At length, still advancing in their claims as they experienced opposition, the House of Assembly petitioned the British Parliament for a great change in the constitution, by which the Legislative Council should be made elective, like the Senate of the United States, and the Executive Council should be made responsible to the Legislature. This, as we have before said, was equivalent to a claim of independence, as it would have left the Queen no power in the province, but to appoint a Governor, and to maintain and pay the troops; and it is certain that if the mother country had consented to this mere nominal sovereignty, involving a heavy expense without power or profit, the Colonists would soon themselves have snapped the slender thread of connexion.

Whether the House of Assembly contemplated *independence* in this claim we know not; it is clear they wanted the power of *self-government*; and so determined were they to have it, that in 1833 they exercised their constitutional power of stopping the supplies, declaring that they would grant no more money until an Elective Council was conceded to them. From that time forward the House of Assembly has acted upon this determination: no money has been granted; and the judges and officers of Government have been for more than four years without their salaries. A government commission of three individuals, with Lord Gosford at its head, was sent out in 1835 to inquire into the complaints of the Canadians; but the Assembly denounced it as an unconstitutional interference, and the reports and recommendations of the Commissioners differed from each other widely. Some reforms were made in the composition of the Council, but they were quite unsatisfactory to the Canadians, who continued to refuse the supplies. This state of things led the British Parliament to pass an Act last session empowering the Government to take money out of the colonial exchequer for paying the salaries, without the sanction of the House of Assembly. And this Act has so alarmed and provoked the Canadians, that they have now organized, armed, and disciplined themselves,—have assembled over the whole country and declared their independence—and are now in general revolt against the Government.

If asked whether we think the grievances of the Canadians are real, we reply that we think some of them are real,—and that we consider the Government there is not, and never can be made satisfactory to the Canadians, without destroying all real controul on the part of the Mother Country. But the practical and important

question is, not what any one thinks on this side of the Atlantic, but what the people of Canada think, feel, and resolve. At the outbreak of the American War of Independence, Mr. Burke, in one of his immortal speeches, exclaimed with consummate wisdom—"Reflect *how you are to govern a people, who think they ought to be free, and think they ARE NOT.*" The question with us, therefore, is, not what is abstractly reasonable and right, or what is so in the eyes of Englishmen, but what the parties most interested think right and just for their interests, and whether their convictions are such that they will hazard their lives to realize them.

It seems to us that there is sufficient evidence to prove that a *great majority* of the population of Lower Canada are *determined to be independent*. Many of the English papers speak of them with contempt, as an "ignorant French peasantry." Now we observe, by the way, that a "*peasantry*" are of all people the most obstinate in their prejudices, and the most difficult to conquer. But the fact is—it is culpable and foolish to conceal it—that the whole body of the French Canadians, the old proprietors of the country, of all ranks, from the magistrate to the labourer, are united in their opposition to the Government. A striking proof of this is found in the fact, that of 78 members who voted in the House of Assembly a few months since, 70 were for the rejection of the measure of the British Parliament, and only 8 for concurring in it! Another proof is, that many magistrates joined in the meetings held during the autumn to organize the effort for independence, and that when Lord Gosford dismissed them from the Commission for the act, the population cried aloud for all the magistrates to throw up their commissions, and a very great number did so, no less than 60 being sent in in one day. Another proof of the general disposition of the French Canadians is, the wonderful energy with which they have flown to arms: in the district within a few miles round Montreal, Col. Gore, who commanded the unfortunate expedition to St. Dennis, tells us, in his despatch—"It is evident that the whole country was in arms! He found full 1500 men defending St. Dennis—report said, nearer 3,000!" Col. Wetherall found about the same number at St. Charles. The whole march of both these commanders was perilled by bands of armed men, boldly presenting themselves ever and anon, hanging on the flanks of the royal troops, and firing at them from behind walls and barricades. Sir John Colborne, the Governor *pro tempore*, succeeding Lord Gosford tells us—"The troops who have had to act in the disturbed districts, and to put down this *sudden and extensively combined revolt*, have had to contend with great difficulties—their communications with head quarters having been *completely interrupted by the armed peasantry assembled on the line of the march.*" We never read accounts of any civil war which more clearly proved the whole population to be in arms. The expeditions to St. Dennis and St. Charles bear a wonderfully close resemblance to the affair at Lexington, near Boston, where the first blood was shed in the American War of Independence in 1775; and the resemblance is a fearful omen. Col. Gore saved his party from the most imminent peril by a hasty flight. Col. Wetherall gained a bloody success, but his march back to Montreal seems to indicate apprehension of being cut off from it. The steam-boat on the St. Lawrence was attacked by 200 armed peasantry. The American Papers of both parties state that the French Canadians are united to a man. It is also stated, that not a few of the British and Irish, in the country districts, sympathise with the French. Do we rejoice in disaster to the Queen's arms? O no—we mourn it as a great calamity. But it would be an infinitely greater calamity to proceed in the contest, if it should be one-tenth part as bloody, as costly, or as disgraceful as the War of the American Revolution.

If we have shown the French Canadians, who constitute so great a majority of the population—the old population, the landed proprietors of Canada—to be earnestly and perseveringly bent on *self-government and independence*, then we appeal to the liberty-loving people of England—"Have you a *moral right* to force a yoke which they detest, and which they deem a foreign tyranny, on another nation, or to hunt them down with fire and sword in a desolating war, for their spirit of independence? Would you submit to the same treatment yourselves? Is it consistent with English notions of freedom and justice?" We ask further—"Are you sure you have the *power* to subdue these hardy woodsmen, accustomed to lives of peril, habituated to the use of arms among their native woods, inured to the rigour of a seven months' winter, and familiar with every defile and morass of their savage

land?"—And further still we ask—"If you should succeed, at great cost of money and human life, in establishing the dominion of the sword over this population, what *advantage* will it yield to Great Britain?"

Let us view the question *on both sides*, and under the three several views of *right, power, and advantage*.

The Ministers, and the advocates of coercion, view the matter as follows: Here, they say, is a refractory and insolent body of French Canadians, not taxed, not oppressed, and having great constitutional and commercial privileges, first making encroachments on the rights of the Crown, then demanding virtual independence, and lastly breaking out in an unprovoked rebellion. They resist the laws, and shed the blood of the Queen's troops. Their country is ours by right of conquest, and by the undisputed possession of nearly eighty years. Many British settlers have established themselves there, under the confidence that they would be protected by their own government, have acquired lands and property, and have formed mercantile connexions. The French Catholics of that country hate them, and, if they had the power, would oppress and plunder them. It is true, the French are the majority in Lower Canada: but take Upper Canada, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland into account, and there the British have the preponderance. The inhabitants of these provinces are attached to our government, and wish for the advantage of our connexion. Under these circumstances, the British government cannot for a moment listen to the demand of Lower Canada for independence. It must avenge its insulted honour; it must wash out the stain of rebellion in the blood of the rebels; it must protect the British Canadians: it cannot abandon the loyal provinces, who pant to chastise the French rebels. Otherwise, every other colony would act with similar insolence, and assert its independence. No one can doubt the power of this great nation to subdue less than half a million of "ignorant peasants" scattered over a large tract of country. The British volunteers in the North American colonies would alone do it. To yield to rebels with arms in their hands would be pusillanimous indeed,—an indelible stain upon our honour, a violation of our fidelity to our fellow-countrymen settled in Canada, sacrificing a bright jewel of her Majesty's crown, and annihilating an extensive trade and much British property.

On the other side it may be said, that this arrogant and vaunting declaration is full of fallacies. Let us coolly examine—

1st. The *Right*. If there is any general principle of human right and liberty on which Englishmen are agreed, it is this—that a nation has a right to choose its own government. We claim that right in England; and we have acted upon it in regard to France, Spain, Greece, Belgium, and the Spanish and Portuguese Colonies. If the right of conquest is opposed to this right of liberty, it may be replied—then you appeal to the *law of force*, and the Canadians may appeal to that law as well as you; they are, at least, as much justified in breaking a foreign yoke, as you are in imposing it. If the equity and mildness of our rule be alleged, the Canadians (who *feel* it) answer, that they think it inequitable, partial, corrupt, insulting, grievous; and they prove their sincerity, by hazarding their lives and property to cast it off. They say we have flagrantly violated their Constitution, by taking their money without the consent of their representatives—the identical ground on which Hampden resisted in England, and Washington and Franklin in the United States. They say that the ancient inhabitants and proprietors of the soil are a majority of at least three-fourths, and perhaps four-fifths, of the entire population; and that their rights are not to be sacrificed to the interests of a favoured minority.

2d. The *Power*. Suppose England, at an enormous expense, should send 20,000 troops to Canada, could they subdue it and keep it in subjection? If we have rightly conjectured as to the unanimity and determination of the French Canadians, we are persuaded such a force could not subdue them. The Canadians are a bold, enterprising, hardy peasantry, expert woodsmen, familiar with the use of the rifle, accustomed to danger and fatigue, and inhabiting tracts intersected and skirted by eternal forests, vast morasses, and rivers which often overflow, sealed up with frost and snow during five or six months of the year—in short, one of the most defensible countries in the world. Half a million of men used to those forests would be more difficult to subdue than ten times the number in a country like England. Lower

Canada is a country larger than France: a few of its towns may be held by large garrisons, but how can the *country* be subdued and governed, when "an ignorant peasantry," as they are called, defend every village, hamlet, and wood? Have we forgotten the horrors of General Burgoyne's expedition, and the shame of his capitulation? Or is Lord Cornwallis's surrender obliterated from history? Besides, the Canadians are sure to receive eager aid from the frontier population of the United States—enterprising woodsmen and fierce republicans. Is it certain that the contest near that yet disputed boundary might not involve us in a war with the government of the United States, especially if we addressed angry remonstrances on the interference of their population? Is it quite certain that the people of France might not insist on aiding their own fellow-countrymen against their old enemy? Is the conduct of La Fayette and of Louis XVI. forgotten by us?—or are Quebec and Waterloo forgotten by the French? * Would not Russia, Prussia, and Sweden, give at least secret assistance to sever Canada from Great Britain, seeing that that would open the British market to Baltic timber? As to the expected help to Government from the other provinces of British America, our hope of it is exceedingly small. The scattered population of those vast regions could yield but few fighting men to leave their homes; and it remains to be proved that they would be willing to fight for the British Government and *against independence*. They are denizens of Canada, jealous of their rights and liberties, and feel more as Canadians than as Britons. Every one of the British provinces has its own list of grievances. It is true that Upper Canada has now a House of Assembly favourable to the British Government; but for several years back it has had a House which has preferred a longer catalogue of constitutional grievances than Lower Canada, and nearly the same demands, including an elective Council. It will not be propitiated by the choice of its new Governor, Colonel Arthur, the severe head gaoler of Van Diemen's Land. Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have declared in favour of an elective Council, which, as we have shown, means nothing but independence; and the House of Assembly of Newfoundland has stopped the supplies. Even in New Brunswick there have been differences between the Government and the Assembly, though they are now allayed. But the population of all these colonies, scattered over a territory almost a thousand miles in length, scarcely exceeds that of Lower Canada; so that there is no hope of material assistance to the Government from them. Again, it is a fact which it were folly to conceal (though it may have been paraded by some of the speakers in the House of Commons in an offensive manner), that desertion among the British troops in Canada is very considerable, and that there are great temptations to it. Looking at all the difficulties and dangers of the contest, we think they are such as even a great nation, and with a clearer right than ours, might prudently decline to encounter.

3d. *The Advantage.* Aye, let us come to that. Let us suppose that fire and sword have desolated Canada, that those inhabitants who escape the horrors of war are coerced into submission, England will then have to pay the cost of victory. How many millions that may add to the debt and taxes of the country, cannot of course be foreseen. The American War of Independence cost us a hundred millions, and the French Wars a thousand millions. Whatever the Canadian War may cost us, will be a fresh tax on the industry and capital of England. And all for what? To retain a colony that is a *heavy burden upon us even in times of peace and of active trade*,—and to retain it by a greatly increased military and naval force,—when the population, hating every thing British, will refuse to consume our goods, and will do all they can to annoy us. The people of England are for the most part ignorant of the handsome sum they are paying yearly for the honour of having extensive colonies. We shall therefore quote the statements and opinions of some high authorities on the cost of Canada. Sir Henry Parnell, in his well-known and able work on "*Financial Reform*," says—

"With respect to Canada (including our other possessions on the continent of North America) no case can be made out to show that we should not have *every commercial*

* The *Bon Sens* (a Paris Journal) of December 26, speaks of a volunteer auxiliary legion of Frenchmen, about to embark for the service of their Brother Frenchmen of Lower Canada.

advantage we are supposed now to have, if it were made an *independent state*. Neither our manufactures, foreign commerce, nor shipping, would be injured by such a measure. On the other hand, what has the nation lost by Canada? *Fifty or sixty millions* have already been expended: the annual charge on the British treasury is full £800,000 a year; and we learn from the Second Report of the Committee of Finance, that a plan of fortifying Canada has been for two or three years in progress, which is to cost £3,000,000!

Mr. McCulloch, in his *Commercial Dictionary*, says—

“The expense of the colonies is a very heavy item in the national expenditure—far more so than is generally supposed. Not only are we subjected, as in the case of *timber*, to oppressive discriminating duties on foreign articles, that similar articles from the colonies may enjoy the monopoly of our markets, but we have to defray a very large sum on account of their military and naval expenditure. There are no means by which to estimate the precise amount of this expense: but it is, notwithstanding, abundantly certain that Canada, and the islands in the West Indies, cost us annually, in military and naval outlays, *upwards of a million and a half in time of peace*, exclusive of the revenues collected in them. And if to this heavy expense were added the vast additional sums their defence costs during war, the debtor side of a fairly drawn-up colonial budget would attain to a very formidable magnitude, and one which, we apprehend, could not possibly be balanced.”

Even Mr. Gladstone admits that “if any one were to look to the balance of the account, he would undoubtedly find that in commercial advantage England gave (to Canada) *more than she received*.”

If then, even at present, Canada costs 600,000*l.* a year for its government,—if, as Mr. Warburton asserts, the duties levied on Baltic timber to protect the Canada timber so raise the price of the article as to have cost us already the sum of 1,200,000*l.*,*—if the Rideau canal cost us 1,500,000*l.*—the Welland canal, another large sum,—and if fortifications are constructing to cost 3,000,000*l.*—we ask, are the people of England fools enough to plunge into another war, to spill rivers of blood, and squander millions of treasure, for the sake of retaining this reluctant and worse than worthless colony? All we have hitherto said under the head of expense is on the supposition that we *succeed* in coercing the Canadians. But *if we fail*, as we did in the case of the United States, what then! Then what becomes of our national honour, our commercial advantage, the security of British settlers and property? Then shall we be bankrupt indeed in honour;—then shall we have alienated a nation which might be among our best customers;—then shall we have exposed the British in Canada to persecution, confiscation of property, and death; and then the loyalist refugees, reduced to the situation of exiles and beggars, must be pensioned on the people of England. If we were to declare Canada independent, it would be a positive relief to England, a great stimulus to the prosperity of Canada, (for a nation always gains by freedom), and a means of increasing our future trade to that country:† whilst it would afford us the opportunity of securing by treaty the rights and property of all the British inhabitants.

All history, and especially the history of our own times, shows that large and improving countries cannot be permanently held in the subjection of colonies, any more than a child can be prevented from growing into a man, or kept through life dangling at his mother's apron strings. Colonies, in fact, are generally a drain upon the country that holds them—expensive in the acquisition, expensive in the defence, expensive in the ineffectual struggle to keep them: but if they were ever so profitable, they can only be held for a time. The figure familiarly used to indicate the connection between a *mother* country and its colony, shows that the former takes upon itself *parental* duties. And what are the duties of a parent? Surely, to protect, to nurture, to qualify for independent action. But as surely do those duties

* The poor timber of Canada is admitted into Great Britain on the payment of a duty varying from *one-fifth* to *one-tenth* of the duties levied on the excellent timber of the Baltic! Thus Canada, fir and oak, 8 inches square or upwards, pay 10*s.* per load, whilst Baltic fir and oak, of the same dimensions, pay £2 15*s.* Here is a high bounty on the use of bad timber, and the practical effect is that our ships, our houses, and our manufactories are generally built of inferior wood at a high price, when we might have the best wood at a considerably lower price! Can any thing be more absurd?

† The trade between Great Britain and the United States is now twice or three times as great as when that country was our own colony; and, of course, we have now nothing to pay for its government or its military and naval defence.

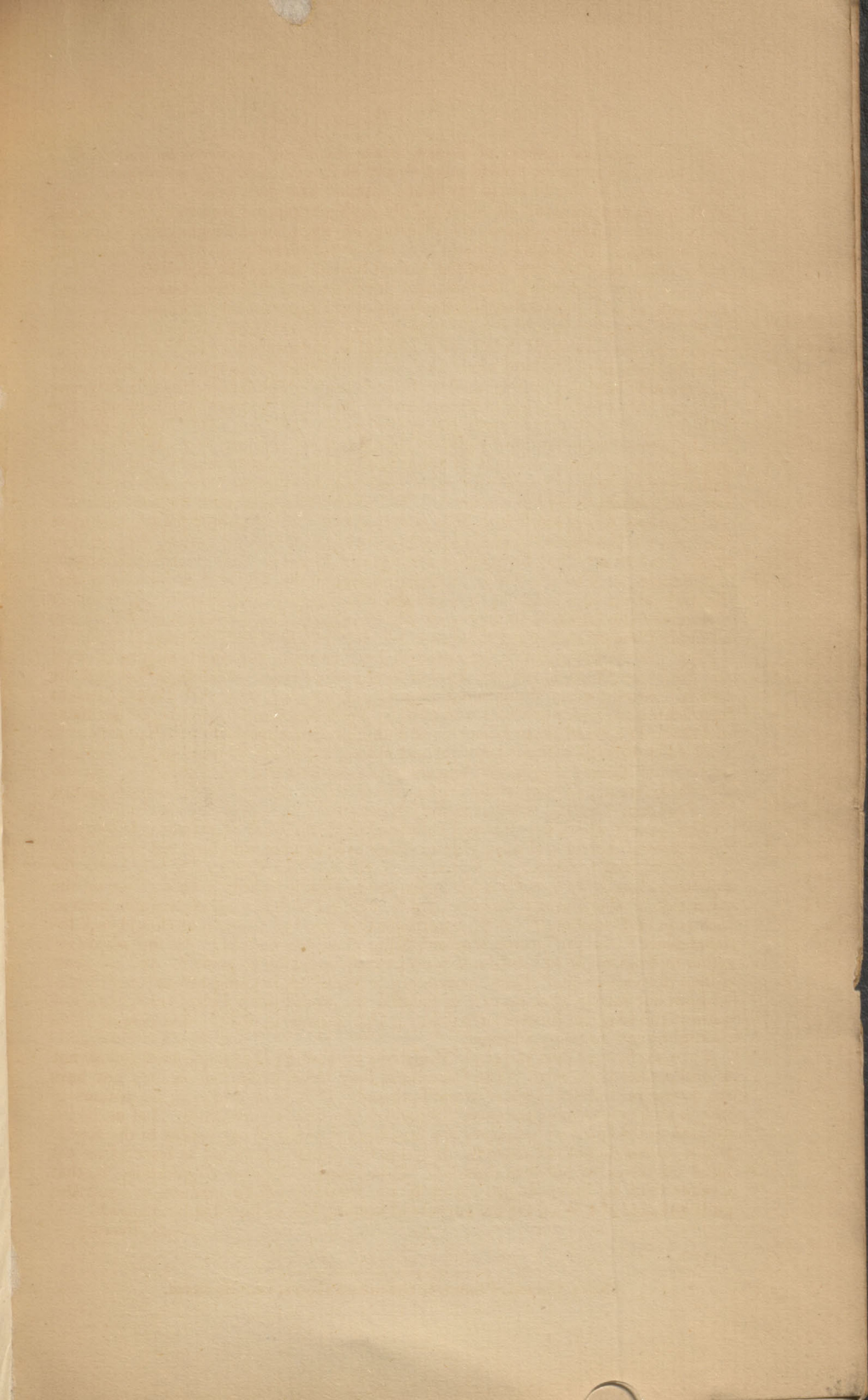
cease in the natural course of things, when the child has grown to man's estate. The authority must be kindly relaxed, and at length generously withdrawn. It is the glory of a nation to nurse up infant nations, who shall speak its language, bear its likeness, and transmit its spirit and its vigour to remote posterity; but it would be base and wicked to oppress its offspring for the sake of keeping them in perpetual pupilage. If England should give to her colonies free institutions, as she did to the provinces that now form the United States, and as she did to Canada, they will inevitably grow up to the love and the exercise of freedom; but doing so, and acquiring at once population and the habit of self-government, it would be contrary to nature that they should remain permanently dependant on a remote country, and subject to the manifold defects of a colonial administration. It is the dictate of wisdom then, that England should release her colonies from subjection, when they become able and desirous to govern themselves. If she is blind to this duty, we may say this *necessity*, her folly will entail upon her grievous punishment. She will then part with her colonies, not in the spirit of affection, and binding them to her by a sense of obligations conferred, but hated as a tyrant and an enemy. She will act over again the conduct of Spain to the Low Countries and to her American dependencies, and will suffer the same ignominious defeat. She will repeat the same fatal error, by which she herself, half a century ago, and on the field of North America too, was covered with debt and disgrace. Surely, the reproach cast upon the imbecile Bourbons, after their restoration to the throne of France, may then be applied to her—"They have *learnt nothing and forgot nothing* by their calamities."

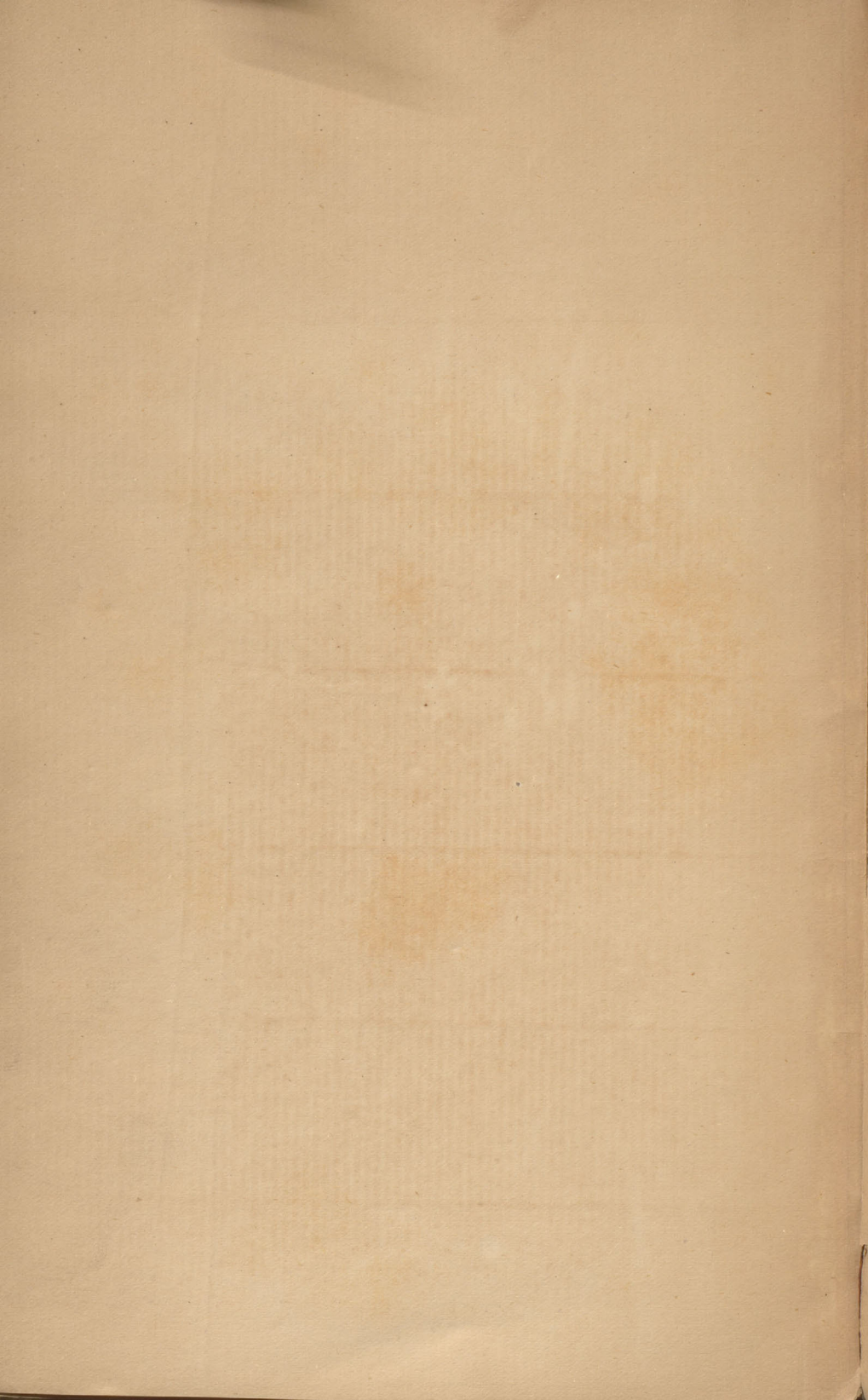
We know it is an easy thing to excite a feeling in England favourable to war. To talk about the national honour, the disgrace of cowardice, and the loss of "jewels of the crown"—to depreciate the enemy, and to give a colour of justice to acts of oppression,—to argue that one concession leads to an endless train of sacrifices,—these are the tricks and fallacies which were resorted to at the beginning of both the American Wars and of the French War; and dearly indeed have they cost the nation. Almost every thing said by Lord John Russell, December 22, 1837, might have been said, and much of it was said, by Lord North and Lord George Germaine in 1775. We dread these fallacious and intoxicating appeals to national pride. If Lord John Russell will not take warning from the past, is it possible that he can listen to Sir Robert Inglis, denying that nations have any rights at all, or read the *Standard*, ferociously urging the Protestants of England to a *religious crusade* against the *Papists* of Canada, without taking the alarm?

War, except where it is *just and necessary*, is the *greatest of crimes*. It involves an amount of horror and misery never imagined by men who have not trodden the battle field, and witnessed the storming of cities. *Has England a just cause for inflicting these horrors on Canada?* Has she so clear a right to hold a nation on the other side of the Atlantic in subjection?—has her colonial administration been so incorrupt and excellent? Is it so unreasonable that the Canadians should seek independence? Is the prospect of subduing them so certain? Is the advantage either to England or to Canada of a prolonged connexion so great? Are all those things (for every one of them is necessary to justify us in going to war), so indisputably in our favour, that we can unsheathe the sword with a clear conscience, and commit the issue to the God of battles? Our answer is, NO! Not one of these conditions can be safely affirmed.

Then we beseech her Majesty's Ministers, we beseech the people of England, not to plunge into Civil War. The Canadians may have committed errors; but have not *we* committed still greater towards them? If it is a crime to be jealous of liberty and to love independence, England is the first of criminals. Let us be indulgent to the spirit we ourselves are breathing through all our organs to the world. But if justice do not influence us, if sympathy cannot move us, at least let us not blind ourselves to our own interest. That interest, beyond all question, is, that Canada shall be independent. And if so, would it not be madness to incur the guilt and cost of a War, for the purpose of keeping her in forced subjugation?

Leeds Mercury.





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