

**THE CANADIAN CRISIS
AND LORD DURHAM'S
MISSION TO THE NORTH
AMERICAN COLONIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649310005

The Canadian Crisis and Lord Durham's Mission to the North American Colonies by M. N. O.

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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M. N. O.

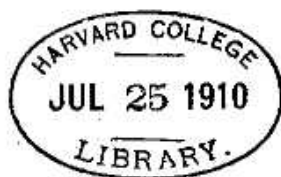
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THE
CANADIAN CRISIS,
AND
LORD DURHAM'S MISSION
TO THE
NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES:

WITH REMARKS,
THE RESULT OF PERSONAL OBSERVATION IN THE COLONIES
AND THE UNITED STATES, ON THE REMEDIAL
MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED IN THE
NORTH AMERICAN PROVINCES.

LONDON:
J. RODWELL, 46, NEW BOND STREET.
1838.

Can 434.6



Francis Parkman Fund

LONDON:
PRINTED BY IBOTSON AND PALMER,
SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

THE CANADIAN CRISIS.

CHAPTER I.

Extreme importance of Lord Durham's mission—Real state of Canada little known—Mr. E. Ellice's speech—Author's means of information on Canadian question—American settlers in Canada—Catholic clergy—Causes of discontent.

LORD DURHAM is about to depart for Canada. On him will soon depend the very existence, as colonies, of the British possessions in North America. If the measures pursued by him are judicious, our colonies are not only preserved, but will, in all human probability, make a progress, and attain a degree of prosperity, little anticipated by people "at home." Should he take a wrong direction in conducting the affairs of the Canadas, the consequences are sufficiently obvious, and may be disastrous in the extreme.

The late events in Canada have occupied so much of public attention, that it might be supposed by this time that the subject is pretty well understood in England, particularly as there is a

great national interest at stake. Yet the reverse is the case. The debates and speeches, both in Parliament and elsewhere, and the articles in print, with few exceptions, only serve to show a profound ignorance of the real nature and origin of the disturbances in Canada, of the position of those colonies and of the inhabitants, and an almost incredible misapprehension of the question in all its bearings.

Much, consequently, of the nonsense uttered and published on the Canadian question, is doubtless the *bond fide* result of sheer ignorance; but much misrepresentation was, and is, put forward to suit party views—to ground attacks upon the ministers, or are the *ex parte* statements of certain persons in Canada, repeated in Parliament and elsewhere. The mass of the community in England have in general little clearer idea of the Canadas, than the lady who is accused of explaining to her daughter that “Canada is a place over in America, where people go about in boats, and sing ‘Row, brothers, row, and all that!’” Even Messrs. Leader, Hume, &c., do not sometimes evince much more accurate knowledge of the inhabitants of those colonies, and of their neighbours in the United States.

Unfortunately, with one or two exceptions none of those connected with the Colonial Office and the administration have had opportunities

practically of knowing more of America than the above-named gentlemen; so that the debates on the Canadian question in our Parliament afford little better information on the subject than the articles in the French papers. The former are more plausible, and avoid the extreme absurdities put forward as usual by Gallic editors whenever they touch upon transmarine subjects, especially regarding English colonies; but they are for this reason less entertaining, without coming much nearer the truth.

Perhaps the only speech which may be read, and I trust has been heard, to some useful purpose, is that of Mr. E. Ellice. This embodies at no great length nearly all the leading points to which the attention of the mother country ought to be called.

Mr. Gladstone spoke sensibly on the subject, and although unacquainted practically with the colonies, advised with judgment, and a considerable knowledge of the general question.

But Mr. Ellice's is the only speech that really affords sound information on the whole Canadian question. Why is this? Many of the other speakers on the debate are men of more than ordinary talents and acquirements. Mr. Ellice made no effort; he came even unprepared previously to speak on the question; he makes no attempt at eloquence or persuasive argument, but *rem tetigit*.—Whence the great su-

periority of his speech over the "brave words" spoken with such copious redundancy by Sir William Molesworth, Mr. Leader, &c. ? Mr. Ellice is practically acquainted with the Canadas and the people of North America. Mr. Ellice has a great stake in the colonies, and was in America very lately : seeing for himself, and observing with sagacity, and with the attention which a real interest in a country always excites, into the actual state of things in our colonies and the neighbouring states, he gives simply and effectively the result of his observations.

It may be thought that this is speaking somewhat *ex cathedra* on the subject of Canada ; but the writer of this has had no ordinary opportunities (for an Englishman) of seeing and judging for himself on the Canadian question. He passed some years in America, and ten years ago made a tour in Canada, and passed some months on the "lines" (frontiers) of Canada and the United States. He was much in the state of Vermont, which has been lately, from its position and other circumstances, the head-quarters of the insurgents of Lower Canada and their abettors, particularly subsequent to their defeat. From Burlington, Montpelier, and other places in that state, were dated most of the inflammatory articles on the subject of the Canadian insurrection, and the very imaginative accounts of mili-

tary movements *in esse* and *in posse* that were manufactured to suit the tastes and purposes of the fugitive "Generals," "Colonels," &c., whether American or Canadian, and which were repeated, magnified by portentous anticipations of future defeat and disaster, by the Canadian party here.

Knowing personally, and being incidentally in a position to become acquainted with the leading persons on both sides of the frontiers, seeing and conversing freely with persons of all shades of political opinion, whether in Canada or in the United States, and without himself belonging to either country, yet connected with both, opinions and arguments were often freely urged in his presence with less reserve, both on the part of Americans and Canadians, than is usual when conversing with an Englishman. On revisiting the Canadas a year ago, and again passing through the places lately the scene of insurrection, and which were even then much agitated by political and party feelings and discussions, the writer availed himself of the opportunities afforded him of examining the real state of the Canadians both in Lower and Upper Canada, as well as that of their neighbours on the United States frontier. These are my credentials for venturing to impugn the authority of opinions and statements made by some of the "Canadian party" from *ex parte* statements, and under feel-