

SCADDING

SOME
VICTORIAN
NOTES
1887



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SOME VICTORIAN NOTES.

A PAPER READ AT NIAGARA FALLS, JUNE 22, 1887.

BY

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SOME VICTORIAN NOTES.

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[The Associated Pioneers of the City of Toronto and old County of York, made the Falls of Niagara the scene of their customary annual excursion in 1887, the memorable jubilee year of Queen Victoria. On their arrival at the Falls, partly by rail round the head of the lake, and partly by steamer to Port Dalhousie, they received an especial welcome from the authorities of Wesley Park, a beautiful reserve of about one hundred and sixty acres, skirting the edge of the river on the Canadian side between Clifton House and the great railway Suspension Bridge. After acknowledging with thankfulness, on behalf of the members of the Society then present, the kind words addressed to them on the occasion by the Rev. Dr. Daniels and the Rev. Mr. Mitchell, the president of the Society, Rev. Dr. Scadding, proceeded as follows.]

The present jubilee season has naturally had the effect of calling forth recollections of the Queen in every quarter, and anecdotes connected with every stage of her eventful life have abounded in the countless publications of the day, together with pictorial representations of the varying appearance of her person from the cradle to the present hour. It will therefore be considered pardonable, perhaps, if I venture to add my small quota to the general mass of particulars now engaging the public attention in this direction. Some years ago (it was on Wednesday, June 24th, 1840) I had the good fortune to hear the Queen speak for a few moments, or rather to read aloud; and the words then heard were noted down, and have been prized by me ever since as a kind of royal autograph, not of the pen upon paper, but of the living voice upon the mysterious tablet of memory. It will possibly be remembered by some of you that in the year 1840 an attempt was made on the Queen's life, by a person, more senseless perhaps than really malignant, named Oxford, who fired two pistol shots into the Queen's carriage from quite a short distance, while driving in one of the London parks. "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good." So the proverb avers, and its truth was proved in this case. The incident, so unpleasant for the

Queen, and which might have been so disastrous to the nation, led to one's having the chance of hearing the tones of the Queen's voice while uttering the words which the present occasion prompts me to repeat to you. Congratulations on the Queen's escape poured in from all parts of the three kingdoms. It was my lot to accompany a deputation from the University of Cambridge which came up to town on an errand of this nature. In reply to the felicitations of that learned body, the Queen said: "I gratefully acknowledge with you the providential interposition of the Father of all mercies, in our recent preservation from unexpected peril. I thank you for the prayers which you offer up for my welfare, and I trust that I may continue to receive, as I shall study always to deserve, these expressions of loyalty and attachment which this occasion has so universally called forth." And these are the words which I have stored up in the mental cabinet. The impression they made upon me at the time I heard them, I can never forget, so clear, so musical, so exquisite in their accentuation, seemed the tones in which they were pronounced. The Queen was seated at the moment in semi-state, in the throne-room of Buckingham Palace—the same palace from which she issued forth yesterday [June 21, 1887] to commence her solemn progress to Westminster Abbey, for the purpose of acknowledging before the world, as a Christian sovereign, the protecting hand of the Father of all mercies, again,—now on a retrospect of fifty years.

Several other pleasant experiences were connected with this hearing the tones of the Queen's voice. I had for example a brief view of the interior of Buckingham Palace; and a glance at the Library there—although, so far as I can recall, books were not very conspicuous in the apartment. It was in the Library that the deputation from Cambridge assembled, after marching in procession all the way from the historic Thatched-house Tavern in St. James Street, down along through the Bird-cage Walk to the Palace. Then I had the agreeable sensation of ascending the magnificent white marble staircase of the Palace, treading on carpet which, as I remember, had to the foot the consistency or deep moss. And while waiting in the Library, I saw for the first time the world-famous Duke of Wellington: he was descending the grand staircase just mentioned, with very cautious steps, as I observed, arrayed in a combined military and academic costume, having just been engaged in reading, as Chancellor

of Oxford, the congratulatory address of that university to the Queen. Accompanying the Duke were Lord Eldon, the Earl of Devon, Sir H. Inglis, and others. Next, after reaching the top of the marble stairs, one paced deliberately on with the deputation, through a series of lofty picture-garnished saloons, leading to the presence-chamber. At regular intervals along the sides of each room, stood Gentlemen-at-arms, each of them having the appearance of a handsome military officer in full dress. At the journey's end at last, the object that instantly fascinated all eyes was the Queen herself, seated on her throne, under a canopy of state, with several queen-like ladies standing behind her—one of them was Lady Barham—and attended on her left by the Prince, her husband, in military dress, looking like a stately aide-de-camp in waiting. Throughout the reading of the address, the Queen maintained by gentle gestures of the head, an air of animated interest; but the Prince, I thought, seemed somewhat apathetic. Both were then, it will be remembered, in all the comeliness of their youth; and he must have been a stoic indeed, who could, under the circumstances, regard the pair without emotion. The Chancellor of Cambridge (Marquis Camden) was unable to be present; so his place was filled by Dr. Tatham, the vice-chancellor, who rather mouthed the address, in a conventional way. In fact, afterwards, while passing out from the royal presence, I overheard one of the Gentlemen-at-arms make, *sotto voce*, a disparaging remark on Dr. Tatham's style, as compared with that of the Duke, to whom he had been listening on the same spot, a few minutes before. The address over, the Heads of the deputation were permitted to kiss the Queen's hand, but the act I could not well see from where I stood. And now the whole company solemnly *backed* towards the grand folding doors through which they had entered, a movement of course creating some confusion among those at the lower end of the room. The moment the last member of the deputation was outside, the doors were closed; and then in a few moments they were thrown open again; when, on looking round, I observed that the throne was empty, and that the whole of the royal group had vanished, all probably, not sorry that the formalities which had detained them so long were over—at all events for that day.

Little thought I, good friends, when taking note of all these things that nearly a half-a-century later I should be detailing them to an association of Canadian pioneers and others, with the thunderous

monotone of Niagara close by for an accompaniment. Yet so, in the providence and sure guidings of the Father of all mercies, it has come to pass—but let me return from this digression into which I have wandered. The words of the Queen which I have repeated to you, were worthy words, propitious words, prophetic of what has ensued. “I trust,” she said, “I shall continue to receive, as I shall always study to deserve, these expressions of loyalty and attachment.” That trust has been fully realized. That aim has been faithfully maintained. Yes, to both facts, what noble witness is borne by the universal acclaim which is now going up from every part of the British Empire, after a test of fifty years. Nay, from our brothers across the gorge yonder, though nominally no longer of the British Empire, is not the same acclaim ascending? As sings a recent English poet [Lewis Morris], addressing the Queen:—

“Not those alone who thy commands obey
 Thy subjects are ; but in the boundless West
 Our grandsires lost, still is thy reign confest.
 ‘The queen’ they call thee, the young People strong
 Who being Britons might not suffer wrong,
 But are re-knit with us in reverence for thee.”

Truly this is so, as we all well know who have been brought into close and friendly relations with the real native people of the United States.

And now let me congratulate the people of the locality where we are gathered, on the possession of a Park so beautiful as this ; so spacious, so complete in itself ; so quiet and retired in its sylvan recesses ; so grand in its surroundings. We who have now most of us so far to go to get under the shade of natural woods—those pleasant reminders of days by gone—envy all who have ready access to a piece of the old primeval forest. I also congratulate the people of this locality and the people of the whole Province on the possession of the great Public Park lately established here, embracing the whole environment of the Falls on the Canadian side of the river. Our Legislature has not been slow to follow the example set with such munificence by the Legislature of the State of New York. By the action of the two governments, the Falls in their totality, are rescued from the degradation to which they had begun to be subjected, and

a boon of incalculable value has been conferred on the lovers of the Sublime in nature, attracted hither from all parts of the earth. I congratulate the people of this neighbourhood on the fact that the great Public Park here has been made one of the mementoes of this jubilee year by having the name of Victoria affixed to it, "The Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park," being its official designation. This particular neighbourhood is thus added to the list of places destined to aid in transmitting to posterity the memory of the present Queen, and to afford evidence hereafter of the greatness of her Empire. "Over how vast an area of the globe's surface was the star of Victoria once in the ascendant!"—generations in the remote future will exclaim. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario, counties are named after the Queen. In Western Australia there is not only a county, but a whole province called Victoria. In the regions that surround the South Pole, there is a Victoria Land, having within its bounds the active volcanoes of Mounts Erebus and Terror. And within the Arctic circle, far up in our North, there is likewise a Victoria Land, a vast insular tract divided from the continent by a Victoria Strait. In British Columbia is a city of Victoria, in Hong Kong is another, and in the Seychelles Islands is another. Numerous are the villages and stations of this name, situated either in our own province of Ontario, or in the province of Quebec, or in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, or Newfoundland. In Africa, South Australia, Newfoundland, Ontario (Co. Hastings), and Quebec (Co. Pontiac), are Victoria Lakes. In North Australia is a Victoria River, and in Ontario a Victoria Harbour (Georgian Bay). At Montreal is the world-famous Victoria Bridge. In addition, most cities and towns throughout the Empire have, like Toronto, their Victoria Streets and Victoria Squares.

From east to west on the continent of Europe, and along the east and south shores of the Mediterranean Sea, memorials of the Cæsars of old Rome in the form of local names, much disguised now many of them (Saragossa, e.g., Aosta, Friuli, Grenoble, Adrianople, etc.), are scattered about, shewing the extent of their former sway. But the name of Victoria occurring in so many instances as a local or geographical designation, in both hemispheres of the globe, will demonstrate to after ages the existence of an Empire far transcending that of the Cæsars. As the poet already cited, sings again :—

“ Oh England ! Empire wide and great
 As ever from the shaping hand of fate
 Did issue on the earth, august, large-grown,
 What were the empires of the past, to thine—
 The old, old empires ruled by kings divine—
 Egypt, Assyria, Rome ? What rule was like thine own
 Who o'er the round world bearest sway.”

We, as Canadians, are specially interested in a change, which has been mooted, as another means of distinguishing this present year. It has been proposed that henceforward the name of Canada, as well as that of Australia, shall be added to the names of “ Great Britain and Ireland,” in the official enumeration of the dominions of the Crown, as the name of India has already been. Should Canada be so honoured, it will not be the first time the dominions of a queen of England on this continent have been recognized among the appendages of her style and title. Just as Lord Beaconsfield’s idea of saluting the Queen as Empress, was not altogether a novelty. For turn to Spenser’s Faerie Queen, and see the poet’s dedication of his work to Queen Elizabeth. It reads thus: “ To the High, Mightie and Magnificent Empress, renouned for Pietie. Vertue, and all gracious Government : Elizabeth, by the Grace of God, Queen of England, France and Ireland, and of Virginia, Defender of the Faith.” Here we have the name of Virginia added to Great Britain, France and Ireland ; and by Virginia was then meant the whole of the Queen’s dominions on this continent, so denominated by Sir Walter Raleigh, in honor of the virgin Queen. (This was the idea also originally conveyed by the expression—the Old Dominion.) So that so far as the poet Spenser is concerned, it would not be an innovation to write down our Sovereign Lady as Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and of Canada. Since the time of George IV., the name of France as a theoretical hereditament of the Crown of England, has been dropped. For this omission, how ample would be the compensation if the name of another France were assumed—the New France of this continent, known now as Canada in an extended sense, covering almost the whole of the northern portion of the continent, from ocean to ocean. In regard to Canada, indeed, as in regard to India, the title of Empress could with propriety be employed, the idea of acquisition and retention by force of arms, im-

plied in the title imperator, or emperor, being in accordance with the facts of history, in the one case, as well as in the other.

And now one word in regard to our visit here to-day, as a society of Canadian pioneers. Our visits to different localities in the Province of Ontario, in years bygone, have had, as is well known, the effect of stirring up in those localities a fresh interest in the circumstances of their early settlement. Such a result has, I believe, followed our visits to Peterborough, to Guelph, to Hamilton, to Queens-
ton, to Orillia, and to Orangeville. We have thus acted, and I hope we shall continue so to act, as a kind of itinerant practical historical society, for a considerable portion of the western part of the Province. Our visit to the Falls, and to some of the historical sites in the neighbourhood of the Falls, will also possibly have some result. I am sure our Society will be glad to do all in its power to draw attention, for one thing, to the condition of the burial plot near Lundy's Lane, with a view to having it put in better order. We shall also be glad to urge on the authorities the propriety of assisting residents in the vicinity who feel a concern for such matters, in an effort to have the battlefield marked by a suitably inscribed pillar or obelisk. The Government, I am happy to say, is well disposed to give encouragement to a movement in this direction; and I trust that ere long every site in the Province of Ontario, noted for any remarkable incident in its public history, will be secured from oblivion in the future, by the erection thereon of some enduring visible monument. As an earnest of the Government's good-will to such a project, it has given help, I am grateful to say, towards the completion of our monument on the site of the old French fort, or Trading Post, at Toronto, established in 1749, by means of which considerate help the monument will be completed immediately, and made one of the enduring mementoes to posterity of this present auspicious year.



