

FROM RICHMOND LANDING TO RICHMOND

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HAD Charles Gordon Lennox—Fourth Duke of Richmond—died in his own bed in his ancestral home of Goodwood at the ripe age of, say, ninety-two, surrounded by a dutiful but expectant family, and attended by an elderly but impatient heir, would we in Canada one hundred years later add one more leaf to the wreath of pity and regret that makes a living halo around the memory of that distinguished man, and that marks his tomb in the English cathedral at Quebec with never failing interest to the stranger?

The Duke of Richmond passed away in the prime of manhood, with a splendid reputation behind him, under circumstances so tragic and through such bitter suffering that his story must ever stir the hearts of even the least imaginative. His régime in Canada was short; there may have been political differences and difficulties; but in the local journals of the time and from private manuscripts comes the reflection of a genuine sorrow for the passing of a greatly respected and popular personality.

From the brilliance of the ball-room at Brussels and the glory of Waterloo to a lonely death in a barn in the wilderness, is contrast sharp enough to satisfy the most morbid of those who reflect upon the chances of life. We are familiar with the account of "the Duchess of Richmond's Ball" on the eve of the battle of Waterloo, but many would be surprised to learn that Canada's Governor was host upon that famous occasion. The pessimist who sighs over the crudeness of our own times, and who from the shelter of his well-heated apartment quarrels with the cold or complains of the heat of our too brief summer, would do well to take now and then a mental Marathon, and race down the pathway of the century, touching however lightly upon the marvels of achievement that have taken place here during that comparatively brief span.

The Treaty of Paris had been signed. Our war with the United States was ended, and soldiers then—as now—were wondering what the future held in store for them. The One Hundredth Prince Regent's Royal Regiment from Ireland, disbanded at Quebec, had been offered the return passage home or a most generous grant of

land and the necessities of life for a year, should they decide to settle in Canada. Practically the whole of the regiment accepted the latter alternative, and in the spring of 1818 embarked on a flotilla of boats, with their wives and children, to commence their journey up the St. Lawrence to Montreal and thence to Ottawa. On the same spring day, and at precisely the same hour, the "Iphigenia" bearing Canada's new Governor—the Duke of Richmond—entered the harbour. The soldier settlers regarded this as an auspicious omen; cheering him with loyal fervour, they decided then and there to call their settlement "Richmond."

The Duke landed at Quebec, there to assume his new duties. The flotilla of boats continued on its course, and after a long tedious journey arrived at the cliff-encircled bay, at the foot of the Chaudiere Falls, on the Ottawa River. There the men landed, and named the place "Richmond Landing." Of the throngs that daily pass by it across the bridges of the Chaudiere, how many remember now the origin of the name?

On the flats that lay so conveniently at one side of the Falls the settlers pitched their tents. There the women and children remained throughout the summer, while the men commenced cutting the road—some twenty miles long—that was to link the land selected as their future settlement with the outer world. This road followed the Portage, or Chaudiere trail, that had already been partly cleared for some miles by the earlier settlers along the water front. It kept to the high ground on the left bank of the Ottawa, till it turned near a small tavern, owned by a man named Steel, at a spot now called "Bells Corners." Thence it was carried on to Twin Elm, or Chapman's Farm, on the Jock River—the home of a U. E. Loyalist settler. Three miles past this point and farther up the river they ceased the road work and built their village of Richmond, altering the name of the river to "The Goodwood."

The task of erecting log shanties quickly and efficiently had to be done by French Canadians, as the Irish soldier lacked those qualities of ingenuity, neatness, and untiring industry so conspicuous in these earliest voyageurs. Winter came before all were housed, and there was some suffering. But the Government endeavoured to supply the people's needs, and in a surprisingly short time the settlement became a prosperous village. The foundation of By Town, headquarters of the engineers constructing the canal that was designed to link Kingston with the Ottawa River, proved disastrous to the Richmond settlement. The greater natural advantages of the new town, and its close proximity to Richmond Landing where the supply boats arrived from Montreal with mails and travellers,

made it the more social spot and drew away many of Richmond's original soldier settlers.

While to the sound of crisp axe work upon the forest primeval the road to Richmond was cleared and made passable, while the settlers were erecting their homes and making the land ready for cultivation, the Duke of Richmond had found much to engage his efforts in Quebec. It was a time of great unrest and discontent, a time when private interest and greed were waging the usual war with advancement and progress. The Duke had arranged to make an extended tour of Upper Canada, and to visit the newly surveyed lands allotted to the soldiers in whom he took a great interest. At Sorel, in the county of Richelieu, he had a summer residence where his family were then staying and where his party for the journey assembled. He had taken a fancy to a fox which had made a play-mate of his dog Blucher, and which seemed fairly tame. But, when he attempted to caress the animal, it snapped, inflicting a slight scratch on the back of his hand. Those were not the days of anti-septics, and the Duke treated the incident as a matter of no importance.

Next morning the party left on their journey, and—though the Duke remarked to Colonel Cockburn, his A. D. C., that his arm seemed stiff—he showed no other sign of inconvenience. They visited York, and other points, finally arriving in Kingston on August 18th. This town was then a strongly fortified military post, and a very important place. Influence was even then being brought to bear to have it linked by a canal through the Rideau Lakes and the Rideau River to the Ottawa River. The party left Kingston on August 20th, and journeying by waggon or on horseback as the nature of the roads permitted, arrived in Perth on the evening of August 22nd.

The rest of the story is well known. But it is perhaps worth repeating for the sake of the growing generation with its questions of "Who?" and "Where?" No one can read the contemporary accounts without being struck by the magnificent struggle that the Duke made to maintain control over his bodily and mental sufferings throughout the four days during which he was aware of his condition, and by the gallantry he displayed in trying to carry out the programme of his tour so that none of those who had prepared for his coming might be disappointed. To sit laughing and chatting, with the knowledge that Death's cold hand is upon one's shoulder, seems a braver thing than even the mad exciting charge "into the jaws of Death." The Duke insisted upon proceeding to Richmond, and there entertained the half-pay officers of the One

Hundredth at a dinner in Sergeant Hills Hostelry, re-named "The Richmond Arms" in his honour.

It was evident to the members of his staff that he was not well that night, and they urged him to return to Montreal where he might have medical treatment. Next morning the Duke set out on foot, accompanied by Colonel Cockburn, to walk past the rapids of the Goodwood, and thence to take a canoe to Twin Elm where a waggon waited to take the party to Richmond Landing and the boat for Montreal. His aversion to water had been growing hourly, and it must have cost him an almost superhuman struggle to enter the canoe. But he did so, and was paddled some distance down the stream. His sufferings became so aggravated that he insisted upon landing again, and with the assistance of his officers the Duke reached the barn belonging to the settler Chapman. There the terrible convulsions of hydrophobia overcame him, and the officers could do little to relieve his pain. In moments of consciousness he dictated last messages to family and friends, that prove how tender, thoughtful and kind was his nature.

The house, to which they finally carried him to die, is gone. A ploughed garden and a group of lilacs are all that remain to mark the spot. In the sunlit silence of the country, the tinkle of a cow bell and the droning of the hundreds of bees that seek honey from the lilacs assist the dreamer of dreams to revisualize the past. The barn is still there, however, its weather-beaten boards seeming to defy the passage of time. Few know the exact place of this barn, and there are no identifying marks. Unless one of our Societies whose work has already done so much to preserve our Canadian traditions should be able to add it to the list of their good undertakings, before many years it also will have become but a vague memory. The Goodwood River that flows so quietly past the place to-day has reverted to its original name of "The Jock." In the days before the clearing away of the trees it was a deep stream, and in the spring of the year it is still very beautiful. But search for it in September, and a mere pond of rushes is all that will be found. The village of Richmond has done its best to commemorate the Duke and to keep alive the old tradition. Its streets are named for him, his family, or his officers; Maitland, Lennox, Murray, Cockburn, each carries a personal memory.

Of that original band of soldier settlers but few traces remain. They were accustomed to the life under discipline and without responsibility. They lacked the initiative to wrestle with the difficulties of climate or conditions; and they gradually drifted away, leaving to the hardier Scot or U. E. Loyalist the task of building up

that small corner of the New World. A few, however, were left whose descendants still cherish the story of that memorable and tragic visit of the Duke of Richmond, and who can accurately trace each family and house where he and his officers stayed.

As one travels now along the smoothly graded and well kept asphalt road that runs by Richmond Landing of to-day, through the prosperous suburbs and past miles of neat villas out into the fertile country, one should pause to consider the amazing change that the hundred years have wrought. We are ungrateful indeed if we do not thrill with pride and remember with thankfulness the toil and the difficulties encountered and overcome by those first pioneers. This road differs in one particular from many others in the Province, for it has escaped the gridiron plan and compass of the road engineer. It ambles and rambles a little; there are stretches where the Ottawa River lies upon one side and elms of a century's growth cast their grateful shade and dignify the fertile farm land upon whose margin they rest.

The Richmond Landing of to-day is, indeed, no longer a beauty spot. But it represents one of Canada's greatest industries. Piles of lumber fill every available spot where once landed the canoe and the bateaux of the voyageur. Out of sight also are the great Falls that, harnessed by man's ingenuity, still foam and roar over their rocky bed. Of the beautiful city that has arisen to the left and on the cliffs above, it is superfluous to speak. In those far off days this was but a scattered collection of log huts. It has since become the inspiration of the painter, the loadstone of the traveller, and might well be the theme of the historian. To Colonel By and his engineers the Canadian capital owes an immense debt. We who come after thus reap the fruits of those who have laboured before, of their failures or mistakes as well as of their achievements. So, though the Duke of Richmond lived in Canada but a short time, though the village of Richmond is still a village and Richmond Landing is but a lumber-yard, these have had their real influence in creating this nation of the western world