

# A COMRADESHIP IN CULTURE\*

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IT is a very great honour to take part in this significant and unique academic ceremony. It is a pleasure to bring to Dalhousie University and to the people of Nova Scotia, so far as I am qualified to do so, the hearty congratulations and warm greetings both of American colleges and of the State of Maine. If you will pardon a personal word, it is perhaps not inappropriate that these greetings should come from one who, born in your beautiful city, and with many ties binding him to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and their universities, has spent all but the first six months of his life as a resident of the United States, thus returning to the homeland some of his ancestors left during the Revolution. Furthermore, I remember my father telling me that when he was a young clergyman attached to the Anglican Cathedral here sixty years ago, he would often come to this very spot, Studley Field, to pitch quoits and play cricket. It will readily be seen, then, that the invitation so graciously extended to me by President Stanley and the authorities of Dalhousie University means much to me personally, and, in the words of Dante, was accepted with no lagging feet.

Last Saturday I stopped at Castine on my way to Halifax. It is one of the most historic as well as one of the most lovely towns on the Atlantic coast. It also designates with appropriate signs historic spots. One of these signs marks the site of the Custom House seized by the British in 1814. At Castine I talked with a prominent citizen about my trip to Halifax, and I was asked to convey to this gathering the cordial greetings of Castine.

It is not my intention to speak in detail of the historic Halifax-Castine expedition which this tablet commemorates. Mr. Harvey, a real authority on the subject, and others of your province, have written so clearly and so fully of that event that many words from me would indeed be superfluous, a mere painting of the lily. The main facts are clear enough. One hundred and twenty-four years ago this month, August 26, 1814, military and naval forces left Halifax for New England, and arriving at Castine the next week occupied that port for several

\*Address at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, on occasion of the unveiling of the Halifax-Castine Tablet, August 16, 1938.

months and collected custom duties and shipping fees to the sum of nine thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds. After peace had been made known, the money was taken to Halifax, and at the suggestion of the Governor of Nova Scotia, the Earl of Dalhousie, with the exception of modest sums set aside for two garrison libraries, the amount was used for the erection of a college at Halifax on the model of the Scotch universities. Thus Maine is very closely connected with the foundation of your university. Now it is undoubtedly true that the war of 1812 was not over-popular in New England. It is also true that since in the whole affair the fatalities on both sides were only two, the expedition could be termed neither sanguinary nor harsh. I had occasion the other day in Portland to consult the original Orderly Book of Captain Patterson kept from December 21, 1814, to March 14, 1815, and the entries there showed clearly that the inhabitants were treated with much consideration, if at times with military firmness. It is quite natural to find that the arrival of the British troops at Castine caused a good deal of dismay. The inhabitants of that town and of neighboring districts in Maine were angry at the Governor of Massachusetts for not only refusing to send them aid in repelling the invaders, but also counselling the federal government to keep its hands off. It was proposed that the worthy man be called "the hero of Castine" for his patriotic and gallant defence of the town, and that in token of the prompt and efficient protection he afforded its inhabitants he be presented with a sword—"of the best white pine suitably inscribed." The local historian of Castine, whose work I have also consulted, states that although the inhabitants of that town had to endure many inconveniences and were heartily glad when on April 15, 1815, the garrison was evacuated, nevertheless the rapid growth of business and trade during the occupation and "the social amenities observed by some highminded and generous dispositioned officers both of superior and inferior rank", rendered the period one of some considerable gaiety. And so the Halifax-Castine expedition left little bad blood behind it.

The use of money obtained in war from the collection of customs for the purposes of education is I think unique in history. As Mr. Harvey has so well put it, "the profits of the expedition were used to found a college which was designed to wage war, not against a neighboring people, but against ignorance and prejudice at home." And if it was the first example of such beneficial handling of war funds, it was the forerunner of some

interesting modern instances. The employment of the indemnity paid to the United States by China for the Boxer rebellion to educate Chinese students in the United States is perhaps the closest parallel. Shortly after the World War a citizen of Massachusetts, Jeremiah Smith, Jr., who by the way for many years made his summer home in St. Andrews, served as Commissioner-General for Hungary under the League of Nations. He refused all compensation, and later the Hungarian government set aside the money due him as a fund to educate Hungarian students in the United States. No doubt a few other examples of the same nature will readily come to mind. All these things help to make nations good neighbors one to another. The use of the money collected at the Castine custom house to endow a non-denominational university is something which I feel sure that even the most anti-British inhabitants of Castine in the year 1815, could they come back to earth, would heartily and enthusiastically approve.

In life we are constantly taught that often the most important and influential things are those that happen on the side. History too has many lessons of the truth that the by-product is more valuable than the project originally planned. The last thing that Major-General Gerard Gosselin, in command of the Halifax-Castine expedition, could have had in mind as he sailed away from here would undoubtedly have been the founding of a university that would make war against all those things that make for war—ignorance, prejudice, intolerance, excessive nationalism. Yet long after military exploits have passed into the land of forgetfulness, or at best into the pages of history, the effect of that military expedition is still making itself felt in the education of generation after generation of youth. It is an interesting thought that in this case at least the result of force and of arms has been the establishment of an institution one of whose aims must always be to exalt reason above might; the sword has indeed been turned into a ploughshare; the profits of conquest and occupation have been used for generous and noble purposes. What a shining example to-day the result of the Halifax-Castine expedition might be to other countries and other lands!

A representative invited to speak for his state in your friendly college cannot of course conclude an address without mentioning our neighborly relations. As a New England poet once put it, "Good fences make good neighbors", and it is well constantly to keep in mind those things that separate and divide us as nations, as well as those many ties that bind us together as friends.

I feel sure that few of you would, for example, wish the universities of the Maritime Provinces to be Americanized. You would wish to adopt those policies and educational practices that might be advantageous to you wherever they come from; but you would wish your own institutions to preserve their native characteristics. That is one reason why you can give so cordial a greeting to those many friends who come to you from across the border. Two great democracies such as Canada and the United States can and do exchange friendly greetings in the most natural way possible. We do not have to line our streets with troops. We do not have to require citizens to make preposterous salutes. We do not have to regiment and control the multitudes so that representatives of another nation shall be warmly received. We Americans and Canadians take friendliness for granted, and pass naturally across the invisible line into each other's territory without fuss or without feathers, though recognizing that the border, invisible though it be, does still divide.

Finally, it is well on an academic occasion like this to realize that the great principles of liberty and freedom and democracy for which our American, British and Canadian institutions of learning stand are being seriously threatened in an alarmingly large section of the civilized world. As the President of Columbia University recently stated, "Ideas and principles, as well as kings and emperors, can abdicate." In other words, unless we are constantly on guard to preserve liberty, and on watch to extend freedom, unless we can have these ideas and principles continuously wrought into our public life, we shall wake up some fine morning and find other ideas alien and foreign and hateful to us replacing them. As President Roosevelt put it in one of his finest addresses, "If the fires of freedom and civil liberties burn low in other lands, they must be made brighter in our own. If in other lands the press and books and literature of all kinds are censored, we must redouble our efforts here to keep them free. If in other lands the eternal truths of the past are threatened by intolerance, we must provide a safe place here for their perpetuation." In a very real sense it is true that such academic freedom is the corner-stone of democracy. Interference with what is to be taught or with the teacher in search of truth, governmental regulations and nationalistic desire to have all youth trained in exactly the same way, all these things are deadly perils both to the democratic instinct and to true liberty. Because both Canada and the United States, both Maine and Nova Scotia, feel these things, I can use the words of de Tocqueville,

“When men feel a natural compassion for each other’s ills, when easy and frequent relations bring them every day closer, when no susceptibility divides them, it is easy to understand that at need they will mutually assist one another.” And so in congratulating this university, which has so interesting a tie with my own state, on having completed one hundred years of fine teaching and on having in that period dealt with one of the most homogeneous and able groups of youth to be found on this continent, I can only add that your neighbor to the south and particularly that state that lies nearest to you is now proud and glad that even through the accident of war it had something to do with your foundation.