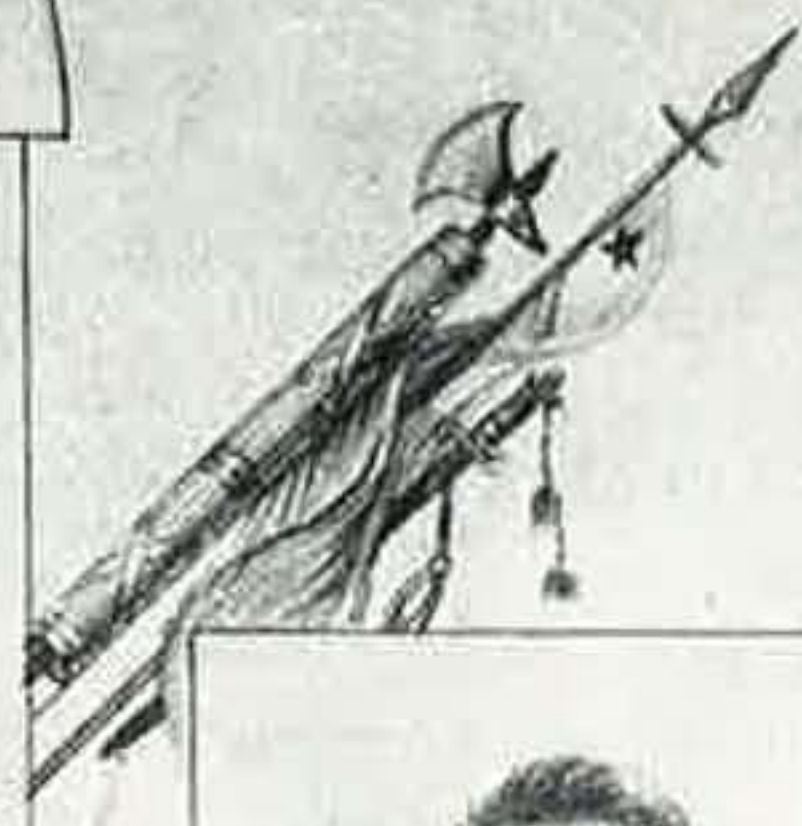
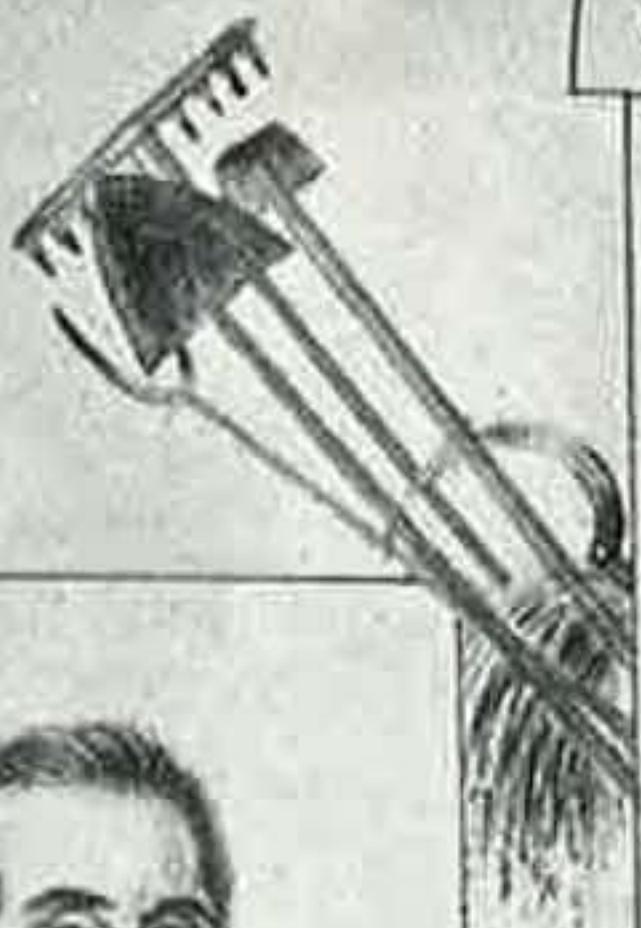


Whose great heart has stoic as his country's love.



Admiral Nelson



J. B. Godeau



Bonaventure Vigor



Aux  
Beaux  
Arts

Aux  
Faveurs  
de la  
Victoire



M. Marchesseault



L'EXILE. EXILE COTTAGE



R. Des Rivieres



H. A. Guerin M.D.



R. S. M. Bouchette



L. M. Wapfen

LES EXILES CANADIENS.  
THE CANADIAN EXILES.

Printed by G. B. ...

# THE CANADIAN EXILES, 1837-1937

by B. E. KRUSE

THIS very old group picture of the "Canadian Exiles" published in Bermuda about one hundred years ago, will doubtless prove of unusual interest to students of Canadiana, especially as this year will be the centenary of the "Rebellion of '37," and a celebration is being considered as a tribute to the efforts of these leaders who helped to gain responsible government in Canada.

The names still quite legible, recorded on the picture are:—

<i>Wolfred Nelson</i>	<i>R. Des Rivières</i>
<i>T. H. Goddu</i>	<i>H. A. Gauvin, M.D.</i>
<i>Bonaventure Viger</i>	<i>L. H. Masson</i>
<i>S. Marchesseault</i>	<i>R. S. M. Bouchette</i>

These eight young "Patriots" or, as they were called in those days, "Rebels," were as a punishment for their rebellion against the government of Canada, ordered to be transported to Bermuda as prisoners of war, "there to be subject to such restraints, on the said Island, as may be needful to prevent their return."

We cannot help wondering if, had the authorities known the delightfully soothing and balmy effects of the climate of Bermuda, they would have considered a sojourn there in the light of punishment. However, to these remote and romantic islands, the eight young exiles were despatched.

On July 2, 1838, H.M.S. Vestal having just arrived in the harbour of Quebec from the West Indies by way of Halifax, was ordered to be immediately prepared, and two days later she again set sail for Bermuda carrying the Canadian political prisoners.

The journey took three weeks and the arrival of the "Vestal" in the port of Hamilton, on July 24th, 1838, seems to have made quite a stir in the unruffled atmosphere of Bermuda, for we read that Sir S. R. Chapman, who was Governor of Bermuda at that time, ordered a specially convened meeting of his Council, for the purpose of deciding whether the prisoners should be permitted to land. The Governor seems to have been in the embarrassing position of having uninvited guests on his hands. He had no power to receive

them, yet he could hardly send them back. An extraordinary situation!

At length they were received by the government as prisoners and limited to a certain portion of the island for exercise, but, as the Royal Gazette of Hamilton of that date naively comments, "without the slightest provision being made for their maintenance." Nobody seems to have thought of that.

However, being resourceful young men, they immediately looked about and rented a small cottage. This cottage, shown in the centre of the picture, is situated under the shadow of the English Cathedral on the brow of a hill, overlooking the city of Hamilton. Built of coral it was for many years known as "Exile Cottage."

Life in Exile Cottage during the long summer days of 1838 seems to have been lived not without some interest, for we read that three of the exiles were Doctors of Medicine, Dr. Wolfred Nelson, Dr. Masson and Dr. Gauvin, who obtained permission to practise their profession, and, it is said, were very kind to the poor.

Others were fine musicians. They played the flute, the harp and the violin so that passers-by from among the music-loving population of Bermuda were attracted by their playing to the open windows of Exile Cottage. One can well imagine the sweetness of the Canadian folksongs with their note of sadness and longing wafted in the breezes of a soft Bermudian evening.

So one long summer day passed into another until at last came one which brought them news of their freedom.

History records how the ordinance of the Canadian Government which banished them as prisoners was disallowed in the English courts, and word came to them through Governor Chapman of their release from parole on October 30, 1838.

In a book called "Les Patriotes de 1837-38," written by the late Mr. L. O. David, we find an account of how the impatient prisoners received the news.

"Lorsque cette nouvelle nous arriva dit l'un des exilés, nous n'étions pas tous au cottage. Les uns étaient à la chasse,

les autres à la campagne. Aussitôt qu'un de nous arrivait, il était attendu sur le seuil de la porte et on lui criait le plus haut possible. Tu ne sais pas la grande nouvelle. Et lui de répondre: Ma foi, non! Ne pouvant retenir le secret plus longtemps nous criions ensemble: Nous sommes libres."

Free! but free to go where and how?

In those days, it was not so easy to leave Bermuda as it is to-day. One could not step into the ticket-office and buy one's transportation on a palatial liner. Boats to and from Bermuda came and went with no regard to time-tables, principally small provision boats. Moreover amongst the whole party of exile, there was very little money.

Fortune favoured them, however. By good chance there happened to be in port a schooner named the "Persevere" whose captain, after a great deal of persuasion and bargaining, agreed to take them to New York or Boston.

After a very stormy and dangerous voyage, he landed them at Fort Monroe on November 9, 1838, where the people of the town treated them kindly. Here they separated and went to different parts of

the United States, there to await the day when they might return to Canada.

The subsequent careers of these returned wanderers make interesting records. That of Dr. Wolfred Nelson is well known. After returning to Canada he became Mayor of the City of Montreal serving two terms as its chief magistrate. He is buried in Sorel.

Dr. L. H. Masson after his exile established himself at Fort Covington but later returned to Canada where he practised medicine for many years. He was elected member of Parliament for the County of Soulanges and died at a very advanced age.

Bonaventure Viger married and settled down into private life in Canada. He founded a large family and was a much respected citizen.

Major Goddu lived to be 90 years old and often recounted with much spirit and animation the events of his long life.

The subjects of this sketch have all long since passed away. The social and political upheavals of their times and the hectic story of their lives are now as a tale that is told but their records live on in the pages of Canadian history.

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