The Man Who Named Petersville

Fred Jacob

Illustrated by

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The Man Who Named Petersville

A page of life from the Ontario that was Upper Canada, as transcribed by one who took the worst with the best and wrote humorously of both

By FRED JACOB

Illustrated by E. J. DINSMORE

Editor's note: Fred Jacob, literary and dramatic editor of the Toronto Mail and Empire, whose reputation was nation-wide, died suddenly less than a year ago [1928]. Recently, among his papers, his executors found the manuscript of a series of fictional sketches of a small Ontario town and its people. Herewith is presented one of these sketches.

The dreary old men who make speeches at school openings and civic celebrations always use the sentence: “No one who does not know about Colonel Peters can understand Petersville.”

That vague compliment has been in the currency of local oratory ever since Colonel Evelyn Peters died in the year 1857, of a stroke brought on by a fit of temper that followed an election. At the time, Lady Mary explained to her friends that her husband flew into an ungovernable rage because both parties could not be defeated at the polls. It was the sort of speech that Colonel Peters would have expected of his wife, poor thing; he had frequently informed her that she did not possess sufficient mind to make head or tail of such difficult affairs as party politics. So he died, and his fame went on growing.

“A great gentleman,” they said of him. “Choleric in manner, perhaps, but distinguished by wisdom and forthrightness.” The country owed much to such men who had generously given up the prospects of great careers at home in order to stamp their characters on the infant communities in a new land.

As a young man, Colonel Evelyn Peters fought with credit in the Napoleonic wars. He was one of the officers who did not idolize the Duke of Wellington, but in the year 1815, he showed his magnanimity by admitting that things had turned out much more satisfactorily for the British than he had expected. If he did not assert that the Iron Duke had muddled through, it was because that description of the English method of procedure was unknown to him.

Because his king and country required such services as he could render to them in uniform, Colonel Peters remained a soldier for a few years longer, and was stationed in a number of remote outposts of empire. Invariably, he found the civil authorities in these places the most pig-headed and opinionated of men, who usually ended up by

writing home and making unfounded complaints to the Colonial Office. His task as an empire builder grew more disjointed and disheartening, so he retired and returned to England, to settle down and found a family. The ruling classes needed more sons to hold back the ambitions of the masses, who were intended by their Maker to be ruled.

A handsome man with a military record and plenty of money could select his wife from a large field. Colonel Peter's choice fell upon the daughter of an earl. Her father was a powerful Whig and had been much impressed by the outspoken John-Bullish manner in which Peters condemned the Duke of Wellington, both as a statesman and a soldier. It showed a strong independent spirit in a man who was so unmistakably a Tory. Colonel Peters did hesitate, at first, about allying himself to a Whig family, but an earl is an earl. Also he admired Lady Mary: she was a damned fine girl. As for Lady Mary, her family assumed that she must be grateful, for she was getting on, and no serious suitor had come a-courting before Peters. Her mother was inclined to blame a tendency to strong-mindedness for the neglect, but Peters was obviously the sort of man to put a stop to anything so unwomanly.

In one respect, Lady Mary proved a disappointment. In her station of life, a woman's duty was to see to it that her husband's name would be carried on for at least another generation. It was all that he asked in return for the position and protection that he gave her. Lady Mary's mother had done her duty fourteen times which, somehow, made it seem all the more remiss when Colonel Peters received only one puny daughter from his wife. Little Charlotte died before she reached her fifth birthday.

"I feared that she would not survive Evelyn's efforts to make her more robust," wept Lady Mary.

But she made no complaint to her husband. His grief was strident and inclined to be blasphemous.

Shortly after little Charlotte's death, Colonel Peters made up his mind to emigrate to Upper Canada and enter Colonial politics.

The idea did not break new ground. Following the Napoleonic wars, a great many half-pay officers, with no more soldiering to do, had gone to the colonies, and from time to time, old friends had written to Colonel Peters, giving him a glowing account of the new Britain across the sea. It was a land of opportunity, but it greatly needed men of education and means. England might give more generously of its surplus of both.

"God has willed that I shall give no sons to my beloved country," he said.

Lady Mary was well pleased to have him blame their Maker, instead of laying the entire responsibility on her for his arrowless quiver.

"I shall go to Upper Canada," he continued. "A man of ability can make a name for himself in a new country."

Lady Mary reminded him that the colonies on the Atlantic seaboard were just as new, and not nearly so far from England. When you looked at the map of North America, you felt that such deserts of uncharted inland must swallow up the inhabitants and leave no trace.

"I have heard your father mention that he knows Sir Francis Bond Head," observed Peters.

Lady Mary went on with her tatting, without comment. When Evelyn was in a chatty humor, she never said anything that might ruffle him, and she knew that it would be irritating for her to break in with the remark that she had never heard the name before. Such a foolish name, too; it did not sound in the least like anything that a man would really want to be called.

". . . strangely broadminded," by which they meant that Colonel Peters was impartial in his condemnations.

"He has been appointed Governor of Upper Canada," Peters informed her. "I feel that he will be in a position to furnish me with an opportunity, of which I should make

abundant use."

Three weeks later, he read to her a letter from Major Septimus Harding, formerly a brother officer, but now living in the capital of Upper Canada. It was full of strongly underlined references to "ignorant radicals," "damned Yankees," "traitorous republicans," and "ungrateful rebels," but what these unpleasant people were about did not emerge clearly from Harding's style.

"I do not think Upper Canada sounds like a comfortable place in which to live," Lady Mary suggested.

"Evidently they are in need of strong and loyal men." He struck the table with his fist. "It is my duty to go there. I can see that."

When Colonel Evelyn Peters convinced himself that it was his duty to follow a certain line of action, he refused to make any compromise, and said so. Duty must be done, even though he responded with a display of bad grace that made things very uncomfortable for his companion, as Lady Mary knew only too well. He believed that the most important thing in the world was the duty of the ruling classes, which had great responsibilities in addition to well-earned privileges.

Colonel Evelyn Peters found affairs in a much worse muddle than he had expected. Things were bad enough in England, with all the great men dead leaving no competent successors. Now that Colonel Peters was interested in politics, he went so far as to admit that the Duke of Wellington had been a fair enough soldier, but the admission was only made in order that the Duke's abject failure as a statesman might be emphasized by contrast. As for the radicals, and even some of the Whigs, they were deliberately plotting, with the utmost stupidity and malignity, the downfall of the Empire. There was no contentment to be found anywhere. Great Britain was, indeed, in a bad way, and there were days when he feared that his country could not last another hundred years.

Though he had not thought it possible, there was still more for the ruling classes to do in Upper Canada. Politics had become a meaningless tangle. Sir Francis Bond Head was governor, by virtue of his king and his God, but everybody seemed determined to make it impossible for him to govern. These colonials had thrown away the precept to obey their governors, spiritual pastors and masters. A man named Robert Baldwin was busy suggesting new methods of government. What an impertinence! Who was Baldwin to attempt to improve upon British institutions, which gave to loyal subjects as much freedom as was good for them? Baldwin considered himself a reformer, and Colonel Peters hated the very word "reform."

"Reform," he would exclaim derisively. "You can re-form a thing without improving it. I could re-form this chair so as to have the seat upside down, but would that be an improvement?"

So he disposed once and for all of reformers.

As soon as he landed in the capital of Upper Canada, he was given to understand that he would find a natural enemy in William Lyon Mackenzie, a virulent editor and

pamphleteer, who spent his time attacking everything that was done by any public man whom he disliked. Secretly, Colonel Peters admired his literary method. Mackenzie never did anything so weak as beat about the bush; when he set out to be abusive, the most thick-skinned reader recognized his intention at once. How badly Mackenzie's opponents were in need of such a pen!

In the Reverend Dr. Strachan, the spiritual head of the Tory party, Peters found the sort of man he could admire. Dr. Strachan believed in the authority of the ruling classes. In a well-ordered community, citizens should submit themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters. Colonel Peters subscribed to that creed, but so far as he was concerned personally, he had never been able to find anyone whom he could honestly regard as his "better."

Dr. Strachan introduced him to the men in control of the affairs of the colony. There seemed to be a general impression that they were struggling desperately to hold their positions of authority. Peters made sure that he would feel at home among them at once, but they turned out to be the most incomprehensible of all. Loyalty was their golden motto, and yet they spoke resentfully of the newly arrived Englishmen who wanted to disturb existing conditions.

"They understand what the country needs," explained Dr. Strachan, "and if the Colonial Office did not encourage the radicals by constant interference, things would settle down in a very short time."

Although a Tory himself, Major Harding spoke bitterly of Peters' new friends.

"They want everything for themselves," he said. "All the good appointments go to their friends. No wonder the reformers call them the Family Compact."

"They impress me as men of blood," Colonel Peters defended them.

"They will be very pleasant to you while they think that you do not want anything," Major Harding declared, "but when they learn that you have quite legitimate aspirations, they will cold shoulder you completely."

Major Harding did not mention that he had had his own legitimate aspirations.

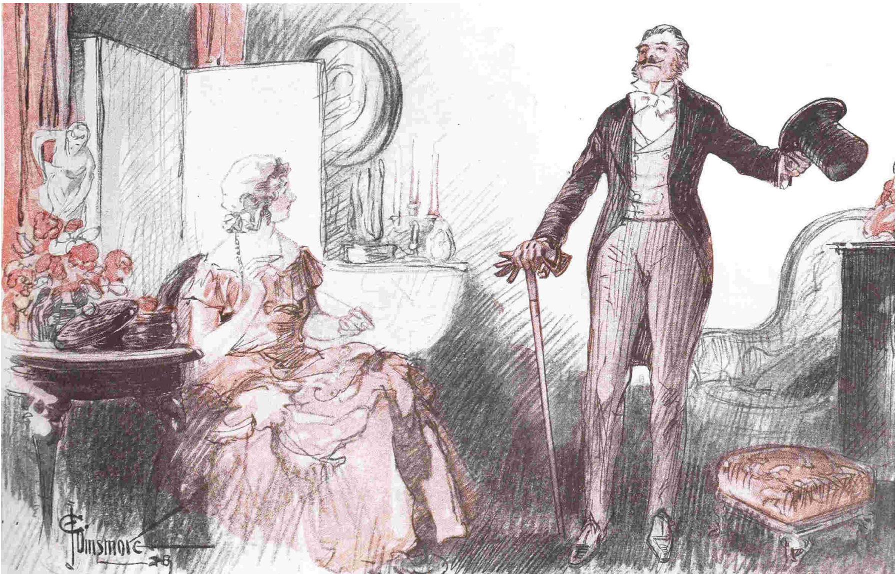
"Harding was never a strong man," Peters told Lady Mary. "He always shows resentment when he thinks that he has not been properly appreciated. I shall test the quality of the Family Compact for myself. That term was intended to be insulting, but it seems to me to suggest, most pleasantly, kinship and a common purpose."

At the end of the first month, he pooh-poohed Harding as an embittered failure. You could find no finer gentlemen anywhere; they had dignity and authority, and were ruling the country wisely and equitably. Things had been very different when the reformers held, for brief intervals, the reins of power in the elective assembly; at such times, law and order and legislation were at sixes and sevens—so he understood. The common crowd knew nothing of administration.

At last he had found a place for himself in the world. Lady Mary wrote home and told her favorite sister that emigration to the colonies had turned out to be the best thing that had ever happened to Evelyn. He was happy, almost merry, and unbelievably

sweet-tempered. But before the letter and the reply could make their leisurely journeys across the Atlantic, the change had taken place. Colonel Peters arrived home one evening, and exploded into denunciations of his new friends.

“I trust that you have not found occasion to quarrel with them,” Lady Mary ventured.



“But this Mackenzie person is not what you would call constructive,” said Lady Mary. “Since when, pray, has a woman been competent to judge what is or is not a policy?” asked Evelyn, completely silencing her.

“Quarrel with them!” he exclaimed with scorn. “I would not consent to bandy words with that crowd of jackanapes.”

“I thought that they ruled the colony with considerable discernment,” she suggested.

“What darn fool told you that?” he demanded. “I have realized from the start that they are the sort of men who would turn right into wrong with their conceit and pretentions.”

“What have they done?” she inquired meekly.

“They are exceedingly greedy men, greedy for power,” he replied. “They resent advice from newcomers, and I do not intend to become a nonentity just to satisfy them.”

Lady Mary sighed. She knew that her husband had been speaking his mind again.

“I told them that if the colony goes to the dogs, they will be entirely to blame.” He began to recall with relish other things that he had said. “By their exclusiveness they are driving away the very settlers that a new country needs. I informed them that I am

advising my friends not to come out here. I shall write letters to every public man in England denouncing the government of this colony."

As she listened, Lady Mary realized that she was bound to lose the friendship of these men's wives and was going to be very lonely, but she did not mention how the matter would affect her.

For several days, Colonel Peters spent all his time writing letters, but found the undertaking a laborious one. His first effort was a masterpiece, but turned out to be so exhaustive that he could only repeat himself in the others, and the process grew monotonous. In the end, he mailed none of them.

Why not follow up the introductions that he had received to the Governor? The thought came to him like an inspiration. He might even take the inside track away from the masterly members of the Family Compact.

He found Sir Francis Bond Head in high fettle. Before leaving England, he had been given to understand that the reformers were steadily advancing in power, and although he disliked the word reformer as heartily as did Colonel Peters, he had been instructed to humor and placate them. But he was not the sort of man to come hat in hand to a bunch of colonials, no matter what the Colonial Office might have to say about it.

He told Peters the story with gusto. As another politician was to say years later, he found his opponents bathing, and ran away with their clothes. The reformers had been in the habit of blaming all the ills and hardships in colonial life on the cupidity of the Family Compact and the denseness of the Governor. By a little tact and a few skilful moves, Sir Francis had managed to prove to the satisfaction of the vast majority of the voters that life would run a great deal smoother in Upper Canada if the reformers were not constantly obstructing things.

"They responded magnificently," he boasted. "At this last election, the undesirable element has been almost entirely wiped out. In less than six months I have taught the people of Canada to detest democracy."

"Do you think their attitude is final?" inquired Lady Mary. "If the people of Canada can be completely converted in six months, it means that they may be completely converted twice every year."

Colonel Peters glowered at his wife; women say such asinine things; but Sir Francis was infinitely patient.

"Madam," he said, "may I tell you how a little weasel always kills a rat. You have been too gently reared to know about such things, but they are worthy of study. The rat is a much stronger animal than a weasel, and he has much more powerful teeth, but he fights stupidly. He bites his enemy anywhere and may even wound him painfully. But the weasel waits his opportunity to fix his teeth in the rat's jugular vein. When he has done so, he never lets go until the rat is dead. His purpose never alters. I trust you will ponder that allegory."

“It is the difference between the constructive mind and the destructive mind,” said Colonel Peters. The remark hardly fitted the parable, but he always regarded his own side as constructive.

At home that night, Lady Mary was rebuked for attempting to talk about things that no woman could understand.

“If Sir Francis had been rude to you, it would have served you right,” said her husband.

Lady Mary had not been paying attention. She looked up in her foolish, wondering way, and inquired, “Didn’t it sound to you as though Sir Francis had learned that speech by rote and was reciting it? If that is the case, it strikes me as a most unpleasant thing for a man to think about and write down.”

“Tut, tut,” he exclaimed and left her. It was a waste of time for any intelligent man to bandy words with his wife.

If any bits of gossip from the counties came his way, he hastened to communicate them to Head.

Colonel Evelyn Peters called daily on Sir Francis Bond Head to applaud his actions and his ideas. He felt himself to be in the confidence of the Governor, and he acquired the habit of speaking as though he had state secrets to guard. When he mentioned political happenings to Lady Mary, he always said, "We have decided" this, or "We have done" that. If bits of gossip from the counties came his way, he hastened to communicate them to Head, and any trivial matter appeared to swell at once to importance because he was handling it.

Once again, Lady Mary found her domestic surroundings running smoothly, as they always did when Evelyn had an outlet elsewhere for his vast energies.

She was very happy for him on the day when he told her exultantly, "I feel that I might almost be described officially as the Governor's confidential adviser."

Then came the terrible day on which Sir Francis Bond Head snubbed Colonel Evelyn Peters. Lady Mary never knew exactly what happened, but she gathered that the Governor had proved himself basely lacking in gratitude.

It was reported about the Capital that the Governor had received important dispatches from London. Things were looking troubled again; the hold on the rat's jugular vein had not proved fatal.

"I am going up to talk things over with Head," Colonel Peters had said to his wife. "I have a piece of advice for him that will dispose of several of these pestilent fellows."

He pursed his lips and strutted away, in a manner entirely new to him.

In an amazingly short time, Colonel Peters was back again in his home; he had never before paid so brief a visit to the Governor.

His face was red and looked close to the bursting point, and to Lady Mary's gentle query he responded thunderingly. "The man is an arbitrary idiot. He will have a rebellion on his hands if he goes on with his blundering."

Then he launched into a stream of explosive adjectives that suggested a careful study of William Lyon Mackenzie's descriptions of all governors.

Under the circumstances, Lady Mary knew that it was useless to ask questions. She went on with her tatting, and formed her own conclusions, an unfeminine habit of which her husband had never been able to cure her.

It was fully ten years later that Lady Mary used casually, in the course of conversation, the phrase, "the day that Governor Head snubbed you."

Immediately, Colonel Peters leapt to his feet, "Snubbed me! He wouldn't have dared. Who told you that? The man who said it was a liar."

Then Lady Mary knew as a certainty what she had always suspected—that Sir Francis, in a moment of irritation, had administered that very humiliating greeting known as a snubbing, ordinarily used only to put a presumptuous member of the lower classes in his place.

For many weeks Colonel Peters gave his serious consideration to the thought of joining forces with one of the groups who were embarrassing the Governor. He could consort with Robert Baldwin without losing caste. Baldwin was a gentleman and a churchman. Even Dr. Strachan admitted that Baldwin's character was above reproach, though his political views were subversive and dangerous. If Baldwin had only been an opponent of Sir Francis Bond Head without being a reformer, he would have been a most desirable ally, but Colonel Peters could not bring himself to countenance a man who preached a doctrine that he called reform.

That left only William Lyon Mackenzie a mere newspaper scribbler and no gentleman. Yet, comparing him to the placid and reasonable Baldwin, Colonel Peters would say, "At least he is a man." To his way of thinking, Mackenzie wrote a masterly style, in which he spoke distinctly without being namby-pamby. He pointed out a couple of Mackenzie's editorials to Lady Mary as a marked improvement upon the milk-and-water, but pert Jane Austen, whose novels she had of late affected.

"But this Mackenzie person is not what you would call constructive," said Lady Mary. "He appears to have no policy, except to make the lives of the Family Compact and the Governors as uncomfortable as possible."

"Since when, pray, has a woman been competent to judge what is or is not a policy?" asked Evelyn, completely silencing her.

Major Harding attempted to warn him.

"Mackenzie is a dangerous man," he said, "and he will hate you at sight because of the company you keep."

"When he hears my opinion of Head, he will find that we can meet on common ground."

"I doubt if he will listen to you."

"Nevertheless, I shall call on him to-morrow."

"And his door will in all probability be slammed in your face."

In that detail at least, Major Harding was wrong. Colonel Peters spent half an hour with William Lyon Mackenzie, but history has preserved no record of the interview. Doubtless, Mackenzie regarded it merely as one more little breeze in a turbulent career.

Peters was inclined to blame Major Harding.

"Look here, Harding," he exclaimed, "you should have told me that the man was a damned little guttersnipe."

"You wouldn't have listened to me," protested Harding. "I did try to make you understand that you were wasting your time."

"What's all this about his printing-press being thrown into the bay?"

"Oh, that was years ago," Harding answered. "He began publishing vile scandals about the sons and daughters of the leading citizens, and the young bloods took it upon themselves to punish him. They smashed up his entire outfit."

The story made Peters stop storming long enough to enjoy a chuckle.

"I am not a young man," he said, "but if they would do it again, I should be glad to assist them."

"What good would that do?"

"That is the only way a fellow like Mackenzie can be taught manners."

The thought of it cleared his brow for the time being.

To be left high and dry in the political life of a little colony was not a pleasant experience for a man of action. Colonel Peters felt his position keenly, and Lady Mary was frequently told of it.

"If your family had not made so much of their friendship with Sir Francis Bond Head, I should never have started on such a wild goose chase," he complained. "You will recall how they urged me."

Lady Mary said nothing. As she remembered the incident, Evelyn had been the first to suggest the move to Upper Canada. If her father and brothers encouraged the idea later, she hardly blamed them.

When matters went from bad to worse during the fateful year of 1837, Colonel Peters sat in his library and impugned the loyalty of everybody concerned. From morning until evening, the word "loyalty" danced on his lips. He used it to measure every politician, and by it all were found wanting. When Lady Mary suggested that whatever else could be said of Sir Francis Bond Head, he was in all probability loyal to the Crown, Peters asked her with ominous calm, "What can you possibly know about it?"

Then, as one might explain the rule of three to a schoolboy, he informed her that Governor Head had been the choice of the English radicals whose disloyalty was notorious.

"They have always been opposed to colonies," he went on, "and Head has, beyond all doubt, been commissioned by them to cause the Canadas to break away from the Motherland. It is as plain as a pikestaff. It is worse than disloyalty; it is rank treason."

When the rebellion materialized, he was triumphant. Had he not predicted it? At a dinner party he gave a personal impression of the man Mackenzie that caused Lady Mary to cry "Hush, hush!" It was the first time she had ever addressed those words to him.

Then the rebellion fizzled out, and he grew as indignant as though he had wanted it to succeed. What fools men were to start fighting without any adequate knowledge of the art of war; they deserved to be hanged for their infernal incompetence! Now, this fellow Head would be receiving honors that were not due to him at all.

"Do be calm," said Lady Mary. "You are quite beside yourself."

She feared apoplexy.

A letter from England saved the situation. Colonel Evelyn Peters read it in his own room, and then hastened to join his wife, with tears of mirth streaming down his cheeks.

"Listen to this," he exclaimed as soon as his laughter would permit him. "Dame Gossip has it in London that the appointment to the governorship was originally intended for Edmund Walker Head." His guffaws stopped his speech. "Nobody knew who Sir Francis Bond Head was until after he had reached Canada. The confusion was due to the names." More roars of laughter. "They put the Crown on the wrong Head. Oh, those damn fools in the Colonial Office!"

In the year 1839, Colonel Evelyn Peters shook the dust of Toronto from his military boots. As there seemed to be a sort of conspiracy to neglect him, the city would have to get along as best it could without him. He moved with Lady Mary, and two servants whom she had brought out from England, to the inland village of Tudor.

Tudor had come into being in the centre of a rich county that supported a thriving farming community. The original settlers had been United Empire Loyalists who had followed the flag into the wilderness. Their interest in politics was, in the words of Colonel Peters, entirely constructive; which meant that they went quietly to the polls at election time and voted for the Tory candidate. During the troubled days of the rebellion, they had remained unexcited and undisturbed. In such a community Colonel Evelyn Peters felt that he could breathe again.

There was just one objection to Tudor. Colonel Peters did not like its name. What stupid person had called the village after a mediaeval dynasty when Guelph and Hanover were still available? Also, he had always disliked the Tudors. Henry VIII had set all Englishmen a disreputable example by getting rid of his wife merely because she had not borne him a son. When Peters thought of Katharine of Aragon, he pictured a bejewelled and overdressed Lady Mary; how differently he had treated his wife who was equally unsatisfactory in the matter of childbearing. Naturally, he was too much of a gentleman even to mention the parallel to Lady Mary. A little of his disapproval of the Tudors was due to the fact that two of them had been queens. The throne was no place for a woman; a woman's sphere was the home. He asserted the truth as loudly as a loyal man could, so soon after the crowning of the fair Victoria.

Peters purchased considerable property in Tudor and wrote to friends in England advising them to come out and settle there. He predicted that the town would soon outstrip in wealth and importance the capital which contained so many dull and perverse citizens. Major Harding sold his property in Toronto and purchased largely in Tudor. Other families with means arrived from the British Isles and built substantial houses on the river bank, modeled on those they had left behind. The noisy stream that ran through the village was mentioned by Colonel Peters in his prophetic moments as a potential source of water-power that would be converted into riches. The erection of a flour mill, a planing mill and a tannery made him see visions of a metropolis.

After three years in Tudor, Colonel Peters assumed the office of reeve, which he held for nine years without ever once being opposed at the polls or contradicted in a

Council Meeting. Then a tailor—a nasty, ignorant Scotsman—dared to cast a vote against one of his suggestions, and so he resigned on the spot.

"The fact that a man like McDonald can get himself elected to the Council at all indicates that a very undesirable element is getting into the village," he said to Major Harding. "No gentleman would ever consent to sit with him."

The last piece of constructive legislation that he fostered before his retirement changed the name of the village from Tudor to Petersville. It was easily done, for nobody, not even McDonald, seemed particularly devoted to the House of Tudor, and there was a general agreement that the money and enterprise furnished by Colonel Peters had been the making of the community.

It was the greatest day in the life of Colonel Evelyn Peters when he went home and informed his wife that he had erected his name permanently on the continent of North America. Petersville looked as prominent to him as Washington, even though he had had to print the word himself on the only map he possessed.

"When your fellow citizens have seen fit to honor you in that manner, do you think it is quite right to leave them without a reeve?" suggested Lady Mary.

"In a way, my position is now more like that of a squire," he replied, complacently. "It would scarcely be dignified for me to remain in the hurly-burly of politics."

In the years that followed, life for Lady Mary was extraordinarily free from rough places. She wrote to her sister in England, "You are quite wrong in your suggestion that Evelyn must be growing more intolerable as time goes on. You can have no idea how much it has improved him to live in a village where he is an accepted personage, and among men who never contradict him."

It wasn't that Colonel Peters held his views any less strongly than in the days before he settled in Petersville. It was a matter of pride with him that he had never compromised in his life to please any man.

The citizens of Petersville formed the habit of saying, "He is a fine gentleman of the old school, and if he is a trifle intolerant, he is strangely broadminded."

By which seeming contradiction they meant that Colonel Peters was impartial in his condemnations. He might annoy the Tories of Petersville and delight the Reformers by describing Bishop Strachan as a thick-headed old bigot, but the very next moment he would be delighting the Tories and ruffling the Reformers by describing the Reverend Egerton Ryerson as a sniveling turncoat. It was a popular phrase of his to describe lost causes as "discredited as Bond Head," and Lady Mary frequently told him that she wished he would not discuss William Lyon Mackenzie in the presence of ladies.

That was the broadmindedness of Colonel Evelyn Peters. Petersville made it a tradition.

Sometimes, as he grew older, he would express regret that he had dropped out of the public life of the colony. Strong men were sorely needed among weak and

incapable politicians. None of them deserved to be endorsed. The result of an election never satisfied him.

“I might have done for Upper Canada what I have been able to do for our Utopian village,” he said.

Lady Mary tried to take the sting out of his regret.

“A man cannot go very far in politics who always quarrels with his leaders,” she said, and there may have been a twinkle in her eye.

It would not have been her husband’s part to follow a leader, but he did not stress that point. Instead, he replied in a grieved voice, “Why do you cling to the idea that I am a difficult person to get along with? In all the years that I have lived among reasonable men—mark you, I say reasonable men—I have come into conflict with no one.” Then he added jocularly, “Except you, my dear.”

Lady Mary bent her head over her tatting. He could not see that she was smiling.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.

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[The end of *The Man Who Named Petersville* by Fred Jacob]