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{TERMS—FIFTEEN SHILLINGS PER ANNUM, PAYABLE IN ADVANCE—SEVENTEEN SHILLINGS AND SIX PENCE WHEN SENT BY MAIL.}

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### LORD DURHAM'S REPORT ON THE AFFAIRS OF CANADA.

FROM THE EARL OF DURHAM, HER MAJESTY'S HIGH COMMISSIONER, &c. &c. &c.

*(Presented by Her Majesty's Command.)*

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

Your Majesty, in intrusting me with the government of the province of Lower Canada during the critical period of the suspension of its constitution, was pleased, at the same time, to impose on me a task of equal difficulty, and of far more permanent importance, by appointing me your High Commissioner for the adjustment of certain important questions depending in the provinces of Lower and Upper Canada, respecting the present and future government of the said provinces." To enable me to discharge this duty with the greater efficiency, I was invested, not only with the title, but with the actual functions of Governor General of all your Majesty's North American provinces; and my instructions restricted my authority by none of those limitations that had, in fact, deprived preceding governors of Lower Canada of all control over the other provinces, which, nevertheless, it had been the practice to render nominally subordinate to them. It was in addition, therefore, to the exclusive management of the administrative business of an extensive and disturbed province, to the legislative duties that have accumulated on me during the abeyance of its representative government, and to the constant communications which I was compelled to maintain, not only with the Lieutenant Governors, but also with individual inhabitants of the other five provinces, that I had to search into the nature and extent of the questions, of which the adjustment is requisite for the tranquillity of the Canadas; to set on foot various and extensive inquiries into the institutions and administration of those provinces; and to devise such reforms in the system of their government as might repair the mischief which had already been done, and lay the foundations of order, tranquillity, and improvement.

The task of providing for the adjustment of questions affecting the very 'form and administration of civil government' was naturally limited to the two provinces, in which the settlement of such questions had been rendered matter of urgent necessity, by the events that had in one seriously endangered, and in the other actually suspended, the working of the existing constitution. But though the necessity only reached thus far, the extension of my authority over all the British provinces in North America, for the declared purpose of enabling me more effectually to adjust the constitutional questions then at issue in two of them, together with the specific instructions contained in despatches from the Secretary of State, brought under my view the character and influence of the institutions established in all. I found in all these provinces a form of government nearly the same—institutions generally so similar, and occasionally so connected—and interests, feelings, and habits so much in common, that it was obvious, at the first glance, that my conclusions would be formed without a proper use of the materials at my disposal, unless my inquiries were extended as my power of making them. How inseparably connected I found the interests of your Majesty's provinces in North America, to what degree I met with common disorders, requiring common remedies, is an important topic, which it will be my duty to discuss very fully before closing this report. My object at present is merely to explain the extent of the task imposed on me, and to point out the fact that an inquiry originally directed only to two has necessarily been extended over all your Majesty's provinces in North America.

While I found the field of inquiry thus large, and every day's experience and reflection impressed more deeply on my mind the importance of the decision which it would be my duty to suggest, it became equally clear that that decision, to be of any avail, must be prompt and final. I needed no personal observation to convince me of this; for the evils I had it in charge to remedy are evils which no civilized community can long continue to bear. There is no class or section of your Majesty's subjects in either of the Canadas that does not suffer from both the existing disorder and the doubt, which hangs over the future form and policy of the government. While the present state of things is allowed to last, the actual inhabitants of these provinces have no security for person or property, no enjoyment of what they possess, no stimulus to industry. The developement of the great resources of these extensive territories is arrested; and the population which should be attracted to fill and fertilise them is directed into foreign states. Every day during which a final and stable settlement is delayed, the condition of the colonies becomes worse, the minds of men more exasperated, and the success of any scheme of adjustment more precarious.

I was aware of the necessity of promptitude in my decision on the most important of the questions committed to me, at a very early period after my acceptance of the mission which your Majesty was pleased to confide to me. Before leaving England, I assured your Majesty's Ministers that the plan which I should suggest for the future government of the Canadas should be in readiness by the commencement of the ensuing session; and, though I had made provision that, under any circumstances, the measures which I might suggest should be explained and supported in parliament by some person who would have had a share in the preparation of them, I added, that it was not improbable that I might deem it my paramount duty towards the provinces intrusted to me to attend in the House of Lords, for the purpose of explaining my own views, and supporting my own recommendations. My resignation of the office of Governor General, has, therefore, in nowise precipitated my suggestion of the plan which appears, to me best calculated to settle the future form and policy of government in the Canadas.—It has prevented, certainly, my completing some inquiries which I had instituted, with a view of offering practical reforms of essential, but still of subordinate, importance. But with the chief of my duties as High Commissioner, that of suggesting the future constitution of those colonies, that event has interfered in no way, except in so far as the circumstances which attended it occasioned an undue intrusion of extraneous business on the time which was left for the completion of my labours.

In truth the administrative and legislative business which daily demanded my attention could with difficulty be discharged by the most unremitting labour on my own part, and on that of all those who accompanied me from England, or were employed by me in Canada.

It is in these circumstances, and under such disadvantages, that this report has been prepared. I may not, therefore, present as extended and as complete a foundation as I could have wished for those measures of vast and permanent importance which Parliament may find it necessary to adopt. But it will include the whole range of those subjects which it is essential should be brought under your Majesty's view, and will prove that I have not rested content without fully developing the evils which lie at the root of the disorders of the North American Provinces, and at the same time suggesting remedies which, to the best of my judgment, will provide an effectual cure.

The same reasons and the same obstacles have prevented me from annexing a greater amount of detail and illustration, which, under more favourable circumstances, it would have been incumbent on me to collect, for the purpose of rendering clear and familiar to every mind every particular of a state of things on which little correct and much false, information has hitherto been current in this country. I cannot, therefore, but deeply regret that such a drawback on its efficacy should have been a necessary consequence of the circumstances under which the report has been prepared. I still hope that the materials collected by me, though not as ample as I could have desired, will nevertheless be found sufficient for enabling the Imperial Legislature to form a sound decision on the important interests which are involved in the result of its deliberations.

These interests are indeed of great magnitude; and on the course which your Majesty and your Parliament may adopt with respect to the North American colonies will depend the future destinies, not only of the million and a half of your Majesty's subjects who at present inhabit those provinces, but of that vast population which those ample and fertile territories are fit and destined hereafter to support. No portion of the American continent possesses greater natural resources for the maintenance of large and flourishing communities. An almost boundless range of the richest soil still remains unsettled, and may be rendered available for the purposes of agriculture. The wealth of inexhaustible forests of the best timber in America, and of extensive regions of the most valuable minerals, have as yet been scarcely touched. Along the whole line of sea coasts, around each island, and in every river, are to be found the greatest and richest fisheries in the world. The best fuel and the most abundant water-power are available for the coarser manufactures, for which an easy and certain market will be found. Trade with other continents is favoured by the possession of a large number of safe and spacious harbours; long, deep, and numerous rivers, and vast inland seas, supply the means of easy intercourse; and the structure of the country generally affords the utmost facility for every species of communication by land. Unbounded materials of agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing industry are there; it depends upon the present decision of the Imperial Legislature to determine for whose benefit they are to be rendered available. The country which has founded and maintained these colonies at a vast expense of blood and treasure may justly expect its compensation in turning their unappropriated resources to the account of its own redundant population; they are the rightful patrimony of the English people, the ample appanage which God and Nature have set aside in the New World for those whose lot has assigned them but insufficient portions in the old. Under wise and free institutions, these great advantages may yet be secured to your Majesty's subjects; and a connection secured by the link of kindred origin and mutual benefits may continue to bind to the British empire the ample territories of its North American Provinces, and the large and flourishing population by which they will assuredly be filled.

### LOWER CANADA.

The prominent place which the dissensions of Lower Canada had, for some years occupied in the eyes of the Imperial Legislature, the alarming state of disorder indicated or occasioned by the recent insurrection, and the paramount necessity of my applying my earliest efforts to the re-establishment of a free and regular government in that particular colony, in which it was then wholly suspended, necessarily directed my first inquiries to the Province of which the local government was vested in my hands. The suspension of the constitution gave me an essential advantage over my predecessors in the conduct of my inquiries; it not merely relieved me from the burden of constant discussions with the Legislative bodies, but it enabled me to turn my attention from the alleged to the real grievances of the Province; to leave on one side those matters of temporary contest which accident, or the interests and passions of parties, had elevated into undue importance; and, without reference to the representations of the disputants, to endeavour to make myself master of the real condition of the people, and the real causes of dissatisfaction or suffering. It was also a great advantage to me in one respect, that the ordinary business of the government of the Province was combined with the functions of my inquiry. The routine of every day's administrative business brought strongly and familiarly before me the working of the institutions on which I was called to judge. The condition of the people, the system by which they were governed, were thus rendered familiar to me, and I soon became satisfied that I must search in the very composition of society, and in the fundamental institutions of government, for the causes of the constant and extensive disorder which I witnessed.

The lengthened and various discussions which had for some years been carried on between the contending parties in the colony, and the representations which had been circulated at home, had produced in mine, as in most minds in England, a very erroneous view of the parties at issue in Lower Canada. The quarrel which I was sent for the purpose of healing had been a quarrel between the executive government and the popular branch of the legislature. The latter body had, apparently, been contending for popular rights and free government. The executive government had been defending the prerogative of the Crown, and the institutions which, in accordance with the principles of the British Constitution, had been established as checks on the unbridled exercise of popular power. Though, during the dispute, indications had been given of the existence of dissensions yet deeper and more formidable than any which arose from simply political causes, I had still, in common with most of my countrymen, imagined that the original and constant source of evil was to be found in the defects of the political institutions of the Provinces; that a reform of the Constitution, or perhaps merely the introduction of a sounder practice into the administration of the government, would remove all causes of contest and complaint. The complaint was strengthened by the well-known fact, that the political dissensions which had produced their most formidable results in this Province had assumed a similar tho' milder form, in the neighbouring Colonies; and that the tranquillity of each of the North American Provinces was subject to constant disturbance from collision betwen the executive and the representatives of the people. The Constitution of these Colonies, the official characters and positions of the contending parties, the avowed subjects of dispute, and the general principles asserted on each side, were so similar, that I could not but concur in the very general opinion, that the common quarrel was the result of some common defect in the almost identical institutions of these Provinces. I looked on it as a dispute analogous to those with which history and experience have made us so familiar in Europe—a dispute between a people demanding an extension of popular privileges, on the one hand, and the executive, on the other, defending the powers which it conceived necessary for the maintenance of order. I supposed that my principal business would be that of determining how far each party might be in the right, or which was in the wrong; of devising some means of removing the defects which had occasioned the collision, and of restoring such a balance of the Constitutional powers as might secure the free and peaceful working of the machine of government.

In a despatch which I addressed to your Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies on the 9th of August last, I detailed with great minuteness, the impressions which had been produced on my mind by the state of things which existed in Lower Canada; I acknowledged that the experience derived from my residence in the Province had completely changed my view of the relative influence of the causes which had been assigned for the existing disorders. I had not, indeed, been brought to believe that the institutions of Lower Canada were less defective than I had originally presumed them to be. From the peculiar circumstances in which I was placed, I was enabled to make such effectual observations, as convince me that there had existed in the Constitution of the Province, in the balance of political powers, in the spirit and practice of the administration in every department of the government, defects that were quite sufficient to account for a great degree of mismanagement and dissatisfaction. The same observation had also impressed on me the conviction, that for the peculiar and disastrous dissensions of this Province there existed a far deeper and far more efficient cause—a cause which penetrated beneath its political institutions into its social state—a cause which no reform of Constitution or laws that should leave the elements of society unaltered could remove, but which must be removed ere any success could be expected in any attempt to remedy the many evils of this unhappy Province. I expected to find a contest between a government and a people—I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state; I found a struggle, not of principles, but of races; and I perceived that it would be idle to attempt any amelioration of laws or institutions, until we could first succeed in terminating the deadly animosity that now separates the inhabitants of Lower Canada into the hostile divisions of French and English.

It would be vain for me to expect that any description I can give will impress on your Majesty such a view of the animosity of these races as my personal experience in Lower Canada has forced on me. Our happy immunity from any feelings of national hostility renders it difficult for us to comprehend the intensity of hatred which the difference of language, of laws, and of manners, creates between those who inhabit the same village, and are citizens of the same state. We are ready to believe that the real motive of the quarrel is something else, and that the difference of race has slightly and occasionally aggravated dissensions, which we attribute to some more usual cause. Experience of a state of society so unhappily divided as that of Lower Canada leads to an exactly contrary opinion. The national feud forces itself on the very senses, irresistibly and palpably, as the origin of the essence of every dispute which divides the community; we discover that dissensions, which appear to have another origin, are but forms of this constant and all-pervading quarrel, and that every contest is one of French and English in the outset, or becomes so ere it has run its course.

The political discontents for which the vicious system of government has given too much cause have for a long time concealed, or modified the influence of the national quarrel. It has been argued that the origin can have but little effect in dividing the country, inasmuch as individuals of each race have constantly been enlisted together on the side of government, or been found united in leading the assembly to assail its alleged abuses; that the names of some of the prominent leaders of the rebellion mark their English, while those of some of the most unpopular supporters of the Government denote their French origin; and that the representatives, if not an actual majority (as is occasionally been asserted,) at any rate of a large proportion of the purely English population, have been found constantly voting with the majorty of the assembly against which is called the British party. Temporary and local causes have, no doubt, to a certain extent, produced such results. The national hostility has not assumed its permanent influence till of late years, nor has it exhibited itself every where at once. While it displayed itself long ago in the cities of Quebec and Montreal, where the leaders and masses of the rival races most speedily came into collision, the inhabitants of the eastern townships, who were removed from all personal contact with the French, and those of the district below Quebec, who experienced little interference from the English, continued to a very late period to entertain comparatively friendly feelings towards those of the opposite races. But this is a distinction which has unfortunately, year after year, been exhibiting itself more strongly, and diffusing itself more widely. One by one the ancient English leaders of the Assembly have fallen off from the majority, and attached themselves to the party which supported the British government against it. Every election from the townships added to the English minority. On the other hand, year after year, in spite of various influences which a government can exercise, and of which no people in the world are more susceptible than the French Canadians; in spite of the additional motives of prudence and patriotism which deter timid or calm men from acting with a party, obviously endangering the public tranquility by the violence of its conduct, the number of French Canadians, on whom the government could rely, has been narrowed by the influence of those associations which have drawn them into the ranks of their kindred. The insurrection of 1837 completed the division. Since the resort to arms the two races have been distinctly and completely arrayed against each other. No portion of the English population was backward in taking arms in defence of the government; with a single exception, no portion of the Canadian population was allowed to do so, even where it was asserted by some that their loyalty inclined them thereto.—The exasperation thus generated has extended over the whole of each race. The most just and sensible of the English, those whose politics had always been most liberal, those who had always advocated the most moderate policy in the provincial disputes, seem from that moment to have taken their part against the French as resolutely, if not as fiercely, as the rest of their countrymen, and to have joined in the determination never again to submit to a French majority. A few exceptions mark the existence, rather than militate against the truth, of the general rule of national hostility. A few of the French, distinguished by moderate and enlarged views, still condemn, the narrow national prejudices and ruinous violence of their countrymen, while they equally resist what they consider the violent and unjust pretensions of a minority, and endeavour to form a middle party between the two extremes. A large part of the Catholic clergy, a few of the principal proprietors of the seigniorial families, and some of those who are influenced by ancient connexions of party, support the government against revolutionary violence. A very few persons of English origin (not more, perhaps, than fifty out of the whole number,) still continue to act with the party which they originally espoused. Those who affect to form a middle party exercise no influence on the contending extremes; and those who side with the nation from which their birth distinguishes them, are regarded by their countrymen with aggravated hatred, as renegades from their race; while they obtain but little of the real affection, confidence, or esteem of those whom they have joined.

The grounds of quarrel which are commonly alleged appear, on investigation, to have little to do with its real cause; and the enquirer, who has imagined that the public demonstrations or professions of the parties have put him in possession of their real motives and designs, is surprised to find, upon nearer observation, how much he has been deceived by the false colours under which they have been in the habit of fighting. It is not, indeed, surprising that each party should, in this instance, have practised more than the usual frauds of language, by which factions in every country seek to secure the sympathy of other communities. A quarrel based on the mere ground of national animosity appears so revolting to the notions of good sense and charity prevalent in the civilized world, that the parties who feel such a passion the most strongly, and indulge it the most openly, are at great pains to class themselves under any denominations but those which would correctly designate their objects and feelings. The French Canadians have attempted to shroud their hostility to the influence of English immigration and the introduction of British institutions, under the guise of warfare against the government and its supporters, whom they represented to be a small knot of corrupt and insolent dependents; being a majority, they have invoked the principles of popular control and democracy, and appealed with no little effect to the sympathy of liberal politicians in every quarter of the world. The English, finding their opponents in collision with the government, have raised the cry of loyalty and attachment to British connection, and denounced the republican designs of the French, whom they designate or rather used to designate, by the appellation of radicals. Thus the French have been viewed as a democratic party, contending for reform; and the English as a Conservative minority, protecting the menaced connection with the British Crown, and the supreme authority of the empire. There is truth in this notion, in so far as respects the means by which each party sought to carry its own views of government into effect.—The French majority asserted the most democratic doctrines of the rights of a numerical majority.—The English minority availed itself of the protection of the prerogative, and allied itself with all those of the colonial institutions which enabled the few to resist the will of the many. But when we look to the objects of each party, the analogy to our own politics seems to be lost, it not actually reversed; the French appear to have used their democratic arms for conservative purposes, rather than those of liberal and enlightened movement; and the sympathies of the friends of reform are naturally enlisted on the side of sound amelioration which the English minority in vain attempted to introduce into the antiquated laws of the province.

Yet even on the questions which had been most recently the prominent matters in dispute between the two parties, it is difficult to believe that the hostility of the races was the effect, and not the cause, of the pertinacity with which the desired reforms were pressed or resisted.

The English complained of the assembly's refusal to establish registry offices, and to commute the feudal tenures; and yet it was among the ablest and most influential leaders of the English that I found some of the opponents of both the proposed reforms. The leaders of the French were anxious to disclaim any hostility to these reforms themselves. Many of them represented the reluctance which the Assembly had exhibited to entertain these questions, as a result of the extraordinary influence which Mr. Papineau exercised over that body; his opposition was accounted for by some peculiar prejudices of education and professional practice, in which he was said to find little concurrence among his countrymen; it was stated that even his influence would not have prevented these questions from being favourably entertained by the assembly, had it ever met again; and I received assurances of a friendly disposition towards them, which I must say were very much at variance with the reluctance which the leading men of the party showed to any co-operation with me in the attempts which I subsequently made to carry these very objects into effect. At the same time while the leading men of the French party thus rendered themselves liable to the imputation of a timid or narrow-minded opposition of these improvements, the mass of the French population, who are immediate sufferers by the abuses of the seignorial system, exhibited, in every possible shape, their hostility to the state of things which their leaders had so obstinately maintained. There is every reason to believe that a great number of the peasants who fought at St. Dennis and St. Charles, imagined that the principal result of success would be the overthrow of tithes and feudal burthens; and in the declaration of independence which Dr. Robert Nelson issued, two of the objects of the insurrection were stated to be the abolition of feudal tenures, and the establishment of registry offices.* When I observe these inconsistencies of conduct among the opponents and supporters of these reforms; when I consider that their attainment was prevented by means of the *censitaires*, the very persons most interested in their success, and that they were not more eagerly demanded by the wealthier of the English, than by the artisans and labourers of that race whose individual interests would hardly have derived much direct benefit from their success, I cannot but think that many, both of the supporters and of the opponents, cared less for the measures themselves, than for the handle which the agitation of them gave to their national hostility; that the assembly resisted these changes chiefly because the English desired them; and that the eagerness with which many of the English urged them was stimulated by finding them opposed by the French.

Nor did I find the spirit which animated each party at all more coincident with the representations current in this country, than their objects appeared, when tried by English, or, rather, by European less of reforming legislation. An utterly uneducated and singularly inert population, implicitly obeying leaders who ruled them by the influence of a blind confidence and narrow national prejudice, accorded very little with the resemblance which had been discovered to that high spirited democracy which effected the American Revolution. Still less could I discover in the English population those slavish tools of a narrow official clique, or a few purse-proud merchants, which the opponents had described them as being. I had found the main body of the English population consisting of hardy farmers and humble mechanics, composing a very independent, not very manageable, and, sometimes, a rather turbulent, democracy. Though constantly professing a somewhat extravagant loyalty and high prerogative doctrines, I found them very determined on maintaining in their own persons a great respect for popular rights, and singularly ready to enforce their wishes by the strongest means of constitutional pressure on the government. Between them and the Canadians I found the strongest hostility; and that hostility was, as might be expected, most strongly developed among the humblest and rudest of the body. Between them and the small knot of officials, whose influence has been represented as so formidable, I found no sympathy whatever; and it must be said, in justice to this body of officials, who have been so much assailed as the enemies of the Canadian people, that, however little I can excuse the injurious influence of that system of administration, which they were called upon to carry into execution, the members of the oldest and most powerful official families were, of all the English in their country, those in whom I generally found most sympathy with, and kindly feeling towards the French population. I could not therefore believe that this animosity was only that subsisting between an official oligarchy and a people; and again, I was brought to a conviction that the contest, which had been represented as a contest of classes, was in fact, a contest of races.

However unwilling we may be to attribute the disorders of a country connected with us to a cause so fatal to its tranquillity, and one which it seems so difficult to remove, no very long or laboured consideration of the relative characters and position of these races is needed for convincing us of their invincible hostility towards each other. It is scarcely possible to conceive descendants of any of the great European nations more unlike each other in character and temperament, more totally separated from each other by language, laws, and modes of life, or placed in circumstances more calculated to produce mutual misunderstanding, jealousy and hatred. To conceive the incompatibility of the two races in Canada, is it not enough that we should picture to ourselves a community composed of equal proportions of French and English. We must bear in mind what kind of French and English they are that are brought in contact, & in what proportions they meet.

The institutions of France, during the period of the colonization of Canada, were, perhaps, more than those of any other European nation, calculated to repress the intelligence and freedom of the great mass of the people. These institutions followed the Canadian colonist across the Atlantic. The same central, ill-organised, unimproving and repressive despotism extended over him. Not merely was he allowed no voice in the government of his province, or the choice of his rulers, but he was not even permitted to associate with his neighbours for the regulation of those municipal affairs, which the central authority neglected under the pretext of managing. He obtained his land on a tenure singularly calculated to promote immediate comfort, and to check his desire to better his condition: he was placed at once in a life of constant and unvarying labour, of great material comfort, and feudal dependence. The ecclesiastical authority to which he had been accustomed established its institutions around him, and the priest continued to exercise over him his ancient influence. No general provision was made for education; and, as its necessity was not appreciated, the colonist made no attempt to repair the negligence of his government. It need not surprise us that, under such circumstances, a race of men habituated to the incessant labour of a rude and unskilled agriculture, and habitually fond of social enjoyments, congregated together in rural communities, occupying portions of the wholly unappropriated soil, sufficient to provide each family with material comforts, far beyond their ancient means, or almost their conceptions; that they made little advance beyond the first progress in comfort, which the bounty of the soil absolutely forced upon them; that under the same institutions they remained the same uninstructed, inactive, unprogressive people. Along the alluvial banks of the St. Lawrence, and its tributaries, they have cleared two or three stripes of land, cultivated them in the worst method of small farming, and established a series of continuous villages, which give the country of the seignories the appearance of a never-ending street. Besides the cities which were the seats of government, no towns were established; the rude manufactures of the country were, and still are, carried on in the cottage by the family of the habitant; and an insignificant proportion of the population derived their subsistence from the scarcely discernible commerce of the province. Whatever energy existed among the population was employed in the fur trade, and the occupations of hunting, which they and their descendants have carried beyond the Rocky Mountains, and still, in great measure, monopolise in the whole valley of the Mississippi. The mass of the community exhibited in the New World the characteristics of the peasantry of Europe. Society was dense; and even the wants and the poverty which the pressure of population occasions in the Old World, became not to be wholly unknown. They clung to ancient prejudices, ancient customs and ancient laws, not from any strong sense of their beneficial effects, but with the unreasoning tenacity of an uneducated and unprogressive people. Nor were they wanting in the virtues of a simple and industrious life, or in those which common consent attributes to the nation from which they spring. The temptations which, in other states of society, lead to offences against property, and the passions which prompt to violence, were little known among them. They are mild and kindly, frugal, industrious and honest, very sociable, cheerful and hospitable, and distinguished for a courtesy and real politeness which pervades every class of society. The conquest has changed them but little. The higher classes, and the inhabitants of the towns, have adopted some English customs and feelings, but the continued negligence of the British government left the mass of the people without any of the institutions which would have elevated them in freedom and civilization. It has left them without the education and without the institutions of local self-government, that would have assimilated their character and habits, in the easiest and best way, to those of the empire of which they became a part. They remain an old and stationary society, in a new and progressive World. In all essentials they are still French; but French in every respect dissimilar to those of France in the present day. They resemble rather the French of the provinces under the old regime.

I cannot pass over this subject without calling particular attention to a peculiarity in the social condition of this people, of which the important bearing on the troubles of Lower Canada has, to my opinion, been properly estimated. The circumstances of a new and unsettled country, the operation of the French laws of inheritance, and the absence of any means of accumulation, by commerce or manufactures, have produced a remarkible equality of properties and conditions. A few seigniorial families possess large, though not often very valuable properties; the class entirely dependent on wages is very small; the bulk of the population is composed of the hard working yeomanry of the country districts, commonly called *habitans*, and their connections engaged in other occupations. It is impossible to exaggerate the want of education among the *habitans*; no means of instruction had ever been provided for them, and they are almost universally destitute of the qualifications even of reading and writing. It came to my knowledge that out of a great number of boys and girls assembled at the schoolhouse door of St. Thomas, all but three admitted, on enquiry, that they could not read. Yet the children of this large parish, attend school regularly, & actually make use of books. They hold the catechism book in their hand, as if they were reading, while they only repeat its contents, which they know by rote. The common assertion, however, that all classes of the Canadians are equally ignorant, is perfectly erroneous; for I know of no people among whom a larger provision exists for the higher kinds of elementary education, or among whom such education is really extended to a larger proportion of the population. The piety and benevolence of the early possessors of the country founded, in the seminaries that exist in different parts of the province, institutions, of which the funds and activity have long been directed to the promotion of education. Seminaries and colleges have been, by these bodies established in the cities and in other central points. The education given in these establishments greatly resembles the kind given in English public schools, though it is rather more varied. It is entirely in the hands of the Catholic clergy. The number of pupils in these establishments is estimated altogether at about a thousand; and they turn out twenty years so far as I could ascertain, between two and three hundred young men thus educated. Almost all of these are members of the family of some habitan, whom the possession of greater quickness than his brothers has induced the father or the curate of the parish to select and send to the seminary. These young men possessing a degree of information immeasurably superior to that of their families, are naturally averse to what they regard as descending to the humble occupations of their parents. A few become priests; but as the military and naval professions are closed against the colonist, the greater part can only find a position suited to their notions of their own qualifications in the learned professions of advocate, notary, and surgeon. As from this cause these professions are greatly overstocked, we find every village in Lower Canada filled with notaries and surgeons, with little practice to occupy their attention, and living among their own families, or at any rate among exactly the same class. Thus the persons of most education in every village belong to the same families, and the same original station in life, as the illiterate habitans whom I have described. They are connected with them by all the associations of early youth, and the ties of blood. The most perfect equality always marks their intercourse, and the superior in education is separated by no barrier of manners, or pride, or distinct interests, from the the singularly ignorant peasantry by which he is surrounded. He combines, therefore, the influences of superior knowledge and social equality, and wields a power over the mass, which I do not believe that the educated class of any other portion of the world possess. To this singular state of things I attribute the extraordinary influence of Canadian demagogues. The most uninstructed population any where trusted with political power is thus placed in the hands of a small body of instructed persons, in whom it reposes the confidence which nothing but such domestic connexion and such community of interest could generate. Over the class of persons by whom the peasantry are thus led the government has not acquired, or ever laboured to acquire, influence. Its members have been thrown into opposition by the system of exclusion long prevalent in the colony; and it is by their agency that the leaders of the assembly have been enabled hitherto to move as one mass in whatever direction they thought proper, the simple and ductile population of the country. The entire neglect of education by the government has thus, more than any other case, contributed to render this people ungovernable, and to invest the agitator with the power which he wields against the laws and the public tranquillity.

Among this people the progress of emigration has of late years introduced an English population, exhibiting the characteristics with which we are familiar, as those of the most enterprising of every class of our countrymen. The circumstances of the early colonial administration excluded the native Canadian from power, and vested all offices of trust and emolument in the hands of strangers of English origin. The highest posts in the law were confided to the same class of persons. The functionaries of the civil government, together with the officers of the army, composed a kind of privileged class, occupying the first place in the community, and excluding the higher class of the natives from society, as well as from the government of their own country. It was not till within a very few years as was testified by persons who had seen much of the country, that this society of civil and military functionaries ceased to exhibit towards the higher order of Canadians an exclusiveness of demeanour, which was more revolting to a sensitive and polite people than the monopoly of power and profit; nor was this national favouritism discontinued, until after repeated complaints and angry contest, which had excited passions that concession could not allay. The races had become enemies ere a tardy justice was extorted; and even then the government discovered a mode of distributing its patronage among the Canadians, which was quite as offensive to that people as their previous exclusion.

It was not long after the conquest that another and larger class of English settlers began to enter the province. English capital was attracted to Canada by the vast quantity and valuable nature of the exportable produce of the country, and the great facilities for commerce, presented by the natural means of internal intercourse. The ancient trade of the country was conducted on a much larger and more profitable scale; and new branches of industry were explored. The active and regular habits of the English capitalist drove out of all the more profitable kinds of industry their inert and careless competitors of the French race; but in respect of the greater part (almost the whole) of the commerce and manufactures of the country, the English cannot be said to have encroached on the French; for, in fact, they created employment and profits which had not previously existed. A few of the ancient race smarted under the loss occasioned by the success of English competition; but all felt more acutely the gradual increase of a class of strangers in whose hands the wealth of the country appeared to centre, and whose expenditure and influence eclipsed those of the class which had previously occupied the first position in the country. Nor was the intrusion of the English limited to commercial enterprizes. By degrees large portions of land were occupied by them; nor did they confine themselves to the unsettled and distant country of the townships. The wealthy capitalist invested his money in the purchase of seigniorial properties; and it is estimated that at the present moment full half of the more valuable seigniories are actually owned by English proprietors. The seigniorial tenure is one so little adapted to our notions of proprietary rights, that the new seigneur, without any consciousness or intention of injustice, in many instances exercised his rights in a manner which would appear perfectly fair in this country, but which the Canadian settler reasonably regarded as oppressive. The English purchaser found an equally unexpected and just cause of complaint in that uncertainty of the laws, which rendered his possession of property precarious, and in those incidents of the tenure which rendered its alienation or improvement difficult. But an irritation greater than that occasioned by the transfer of the large properties was caused by the competition of the English with the French farmer. The English farmer carried with

(Continued on the fourth page.)

*Among the few petitions, except those of mere compliment, which I received from Canadians, were three or four for the abolition and commutation of the feudal tenures. But the most remarkable was one which was presented from the inhabitants of the county Saguenay and signed by Mr. Charles Drolet, late M. P. P. for that county. The petitioners, who represented themselves suffering under a degree of distress of which the distance is too deplorably certain, prayed to be allowed to settle on the wild lands at the head of the Saguenay. They expressed their willingness to take the lands on any conditions which the government might propose, but they prayed that it should not be granted on the feudal tenure.

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