THE FRENCH-CANADIANS IN NEW ENGLAND.

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In the last Report of the Council reasons were given why historical scholars should endeavor "to make their countrymen familiar with the history, traditions and institutions of Canada." The remainder of the present Report, for whose statements the writer alone is responsible, will be devoted to the French-Canadians in New England. An account will first be given of their numbers and organization and of the national hopes which are centered in them, and then a closer study attempted in the light of their origin, training and leadership.

For the facts communicated in the earlier part of what is thus submitted, the writer is indebted to two works to which it may not be amiss to turn attention. One is a thick, octavo volume, published at Lowell, and entitled *Le Guide Français des États-Unis.* It is compiled by Mr. A. Bourbonniere, Secretary of the *Société de Publications Françaises des États-Unis*, and appears the present year in its third edition. The other volume is: *Les Canadiens-Français de la Nouvelle Angleterre*, also an octavo, and numbering about five hundred pages. It was published in Quebec the present year, and is from the pen of a member of the Society of Jesus: E. Hamon, formerly an attractive Professor of Belles Lettres in the *Collège de Sainte Marie*, Montreal, and well known among his countrymen in New England and New York as a missioner or conductor of religious "retreats." The first part of this book gives a graphic sketch of the material and social condition of the French-Canadians in New England, together with an

ardent and eloquent plea for the preservation of their distinct nationality and for the agencies by which it is believed that this may be maintained. The second part contains a detailed history of a very large number of Canadian parishes in these States. No work is known to the writer which so fully and spiritedly introduces the reader into the life and aspirations of these French communities in New England.

In the preceding Report of the Council, already referred to, it was stated that "there are probably 1,250,000 Canadians now dwelling in this country." About one million of these people are French. Their diffusion is such that statistics are reported concerning them, though confined to the Roman Catholic division, from all but two[1] of the fifty-one States and Territories of this country, though in the returns Oklahoma is not distinguished from the Indian Territory. In Alaska there is a French-Canadian population of about three hundred; in the Indian Territory there are from five to six hundred. The chief centres are New England, where there are 362,396, or nearly eight per cent. of the entire population (4,700,745); and the State of New York, where there are 100,000, of whom 29,498 are voters. In Maine there are 52,986; in New Hampshire, 47,682; in Vermont, 31,467; in Massachusetts, 165,325; in Rhode Island, 37,338; in Connecticut, 27,598. These figures include only Roman Catholics. Probably at least 10,000 Protestants should be added, giving as the total French-Canadian population in New England, 372,396, or in round numbers, and recognizing that these returns are of a date from which we are rapidly advancing, towards 400,000. The valuation of property in the hands of the Roman Catholic portion is reported by the *Guide Français* to be in Maine, $2,400,374; New Hampshire, $2,599,451; Vermont, $2,580,315; Massachusetts, $10,900,604; Rhode Island, $1,919,975; Connecticut, $1,422,915; in all, $21,823,634. The real estate held by the French-Canadian Roman Catholics in the country is

[1] Maryland and Washington.

estimated at $105,328,500. The same authority reports as naturalized citizens, or voters, in New England, 33,563.[1] This is more than double the number returned in 1887. The number of proprietors has increased in the same brief period from 7,568 to 11,990, and their valuation from $13,044,076 to $21,823,364. The variety of employments which are pursued is noteworthy. A very large proportion work in shoe, cotton, or other factories, but no one of the ordinary trades and professions seems to be unappropriated. Besides carpenters, clothiers, grocers, bakers and other dealers in the necessaries or customary conveniencies of life, the ornamental arts are well represented, and enterprise has extended itself to a great variety of business employments. There are also commissioners of various kinds, justices of the peace, sheriffs, policemen, health officers, city councillors, inspectors of customs, registrars, members of legislatures, notaries, lawyers, doctors, journalists, teachers and clergymen.

The Canadian emigration is distinguished by Father Hamon into three classes, the temporary, the roving and the permanent. The first is composed of farmers who come here to obtain means to lift from their lands at home the mortgages which have settled upon them. This class constantly recruits the third. Though the parents recover their homes the children are discontented, and find their way back to the States, and whether they stay or go they become, voluntarily or involuntarily, propagandists in the old parishes of new migrations. Their example, their success, their brilliant descriptions of American life, the fine clothes they wear, excite the imaginations of their neighbors and acquaintances, so that often for one man who returns to Canada five will go to the States.[2] The permanent emigrants, we are told, come mostly from the rural districts, the Eastern counties,

[1] In Maine, 12,100; New Hampshire, 3,800; Vermont, 3,356; Massachusetts, 10,740; Rhode Island, 2,017; Connecticut, 1,550.

[2] *Les Canadiens-Français de la Nouvelle-Angleterre.*

the dioceses of Three Rivers and Rimouski. Father Hamon delineates vividly the process by which these *habitants* are transformed into successful operatives, the tenement-house is supplanted by the cottage, and a life of comparative material comfort and social advancement takes the place of the old Canadian poverty and restriction. Though the sketch needs toning down, it is doubtless in the main truthful, and is certainly attractive. If time permitted it would be a pleasure to read its bright and graphic description of French-Canadian life in Marlborough and Holyoke.

We have noticed thus far the concentration of the French-Canadian immigration in New England, and the diversified industries and professions into which it has extended itself. Equally worthy of observation is its organization. At the bottom, precursor and pledge of all besides, is the parish, which with important differences, to be noticed later, is transferred from Quebec to New England. With the parish and its church and presbytery come the convent and the parochial school. In New England and New York one hundred and twenty parishes with church buildings or chapels have been established during the past twenty years, and fifty large convents, where, with the other schools, there are taught more than 30,000 pupils. "Many others are in process of construction and will be soon opened." The parishes are served entirely by Canadian or French priests, using the French language, which is also the medium of instruction in the convents and schools.

Besides these institutions, promotive of a distinct and organized life, there are numerous societies which minister to the same end. Such are the religious associations composed of young women and of mothers, the congregations of the *Sainte Vierge* and the association of the *Dames de la Bonne Sainte Anne*, and for men the *Ligue du Cœur de Jesus*. The latter exists in one hundred and four parishes in Canada and the Eastern States, and numbers more than 38,000

members. Forty branches, with 14,000 members, have been added in the United States in five years. More important still for certain purposes to which we will soon allude is the wide-spread organization of *Saint Jean Baptiste.* Its motto is, *Notre Religion, Notre Langue, et nos Mœurs.* There are two hundred and ten of these societies in New England, with 30,540 members. The priest of the parish or some one appointed by him is now, by a somewhat recent change in their rules, the chaplain of the local association. The members must be French-Canadians, speak the French language, and be Roman Catholics. They cannot belong to any society disapproved of by the Church.

In addition to these organizations there are numerous religious orders and communities.

The first French-Canadian parish founded in New England and now enrolled was that of St. Joseph in Burlington, Vermont. It encountered in its beginning strong opposition from the Irish Catholics of that city, but in 1850 received the approval of Bishop Fitzpatrick of Boston. In 1853, Vermont was made a separate diocese, and a man was placed at its head who became the prime mover in the work of organization whose results we have just stated. There were then in Vermont not a few Canadians, some of whom were descendants from men who had received lands on Lake Champlain for services in the war of Independence, and others had sought refuge over the border after the suppression of the insurrection in 1837. Bishop De Goesbriand, with an apostolic zeal and self-denial, after obtaining priests from Brittany in France, which he visited for this purpose, traversed with his assistants the mountains and valleys of Vermont, seeking those whom he regarded as sheep without a shepherd. At the close of our Civil War began the immigration which has attained so large proportions. Bishop De Goesbriand devoted himself indefatigably to the establishment of distinct French parishes, and to providing for them priests, teachers, churches and schools. No one can

read his fervent appeal, published in the *Protecteur Canadien* in 1869, without recognizing that a primary element in the great work of organization which has been accomplished was a burning religious zeal; and all that we learn of him from persons of intelligence outside of his communion accredits him with a pure Christian motive in his arduous and self-denying labors. He has had the trust in Providence which belongs to his order of greatness. "Providence," he wrote in 1869, "which governs the world, in this emigration which astonishes us, has views which are unknown to us. Let it work. It will know how to draw good from what seems to us evil." And again: "God in his Providence wills that nations be evangelized, at least generally, by apostles who speak their language, who know their habits, their dispositions; that the nations be evangelized by the priests of their own nation." The Church was aroused by the Bishop's faith and eloquence, and the policy of distinct French parishes, served by French priests, has now everywhere triumphed. As usual there have blended in the history, as it has developed, other motives and aims than those which, to say the least, were paramount in the minds of Bishop De Goesbriand and his little band of missionary priests. Father Hamon enables us to discover these without pains. In several chapters he discusses the question of the retention by his countrymen in New England of their distinctive nationality, and opposes vigorously the doctrine of the Baltimore Congress that "national societies as such have no reason for their existence in the Church of this country." The Canadians in this land, he contends, should be loyal to its government, but their hearts must remain true to their first love, their own nationality, a new France distinct in language, customs, traditions, aspirations, faith, if not in political organization. Even here we need not question that the religious end is ultimate, but from the Roman Catholic point of view this cannot be dissociated from the ecclesiastical, nor this entirely from the political.

Accordingly, our author emphasizes, with the preservation of the Catholic faith of his countrymen, and in the last analysis as subordinate to it, the retention by them of all that connects and identifies them in thought and feeling, in spirit and aim, with their brethren the other side of the border. The Canadian parish must everywhere be reproduced. The girls must be educated so that French will be the sure and indeed the necessary language of the home. The vision must never fade of a complete union in language and customs with the people whom they have left in their former home. The feasibility of the most intimate union of this sort, and the possibility of something more complete, and, to their national feeling, more satisfactory, are brilliantly depicted. The law of migration, we are told, is southward. The Canadian territory south of the Saint Lawrence is, in consequence, fast filling to repletion. Already its population overflows into the States. There will be an increasing tide of migration. It will be under full headway by another generation. The national disposition and the parochial organization of those already on this side of the line will hold them to their language, religion and customs, at least until there comes this great re-enforcement. Their connection with their mother country, the Province of Quebec, differentiates them from the French in Louisiana, isolated and remote from their ancient home, or from the Irish, or the German immigration. They are of a race tenacious of its characteristics, tenacious of a different civilization from the Anglo-Saxon. Soon the network of parishes spreading over New England will meet and unite with that which covers the Province of Quebec. There will be practically one controlling social and religious organization, whatever political distinctions may remain. Two possibilities arise in this latter regard. Either Quebec may become independent of the Dominion and of England, or it may be united with this country. In either event there are the strongest inducements to cherish the sentiment of French

nationality. It may be counted upon to endure at least for a hundred years. Then the United States will number more than a hundred millions of men. What possibilities are there of new divisions, new political organizations! In a word, the dream and the vision may at last be fulfilled of the new France.

We do not pause to consider what necessary reductions a sober criticism may make upon such schemes and hopes. Let these be as important as they may, there can be no question that a great power, controlled by ideas such as thrill and consolidate communities, is rising, and is already firmly organized and strongly connected and supported, within our borders. If eventually it is to be "Americanized," this will not come about unless the forces requisite for such a result are kept pure and operative. If it is to gain a greater independence and influence we need to understand its character.

Who are these swarming immigrants? What are their characteristics? What has been their training? Such questions deserve careful study. Some suggestions that must enter into a true answer to them are all that we can hope now to offer.

The French-Canadians are mainly descendants of the Normans and Bretons who came over from France in the seventeenth century. With them are to be associated settlers from Anjou, Poitou, Le Perche, L'Isle de France, officers of the crown, and soldiers, especially from the famous regiment of Carignan. The main French emigration is said to have closed about 1675. After 1672 no new regiment was sent out from France, though the old ones continued to be recruited and thus added somewhat to the number of the colonists. Some contrabands, not more than two hundred, are admitted by the same writer to have been sent over between 1700 and 1730.[1]

[1] *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, Vol. III. Section I., pp. 13-28. Communication by Benjamin Sulte.

Some authors have contended that there is in this race a large percentage of Indian blood. This admixture is credited to the time of the earlier settlers, and traces of it are claimed with great confidence to be apparent in the features of many Canadians of the present day. Such a representation appears to be insufficiently grounded in what is known of the early history, and to involve a great exaggeration of what is now observable, or insecure inference from it. During the past year a distinguished scholar, the *Abbé* Tanguay, has published the seventh volume of his monumental *Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes.* It gives as complete a record as the learned author has found to be possible of every Canadian family down to the Conquest, to which are added some materials appropriate to later volumes which the author fears his strength may not enable him to finish. No such work is possible among ourselves, or from the English parishes, since the records are far less complete. In Canada they have been remarkably well kept and preserved, so that the boast is made that every descendant of the original settlers can trace his family history, in its beginnings in this country, in this Dictionary. At the close of the last volume, a list is given of whites known to have married Indian women during the preceding two centuries of Canadian history. They number ninety-four. The author claims that the children of these marriages were all dead before the close of the last century; that a few, but only a few, half-breeds from the West have married into the race, and that the mixed element is imperceptible in a nation of 2,000,000. There are a few families, we have in mind two, which are of distinction in public and social life, that are known to have Indian blood, and this fact excites the same sort of comment that attaches with us to the supposed descendants of Pocahontas. If it be suggested that the amount of admixture is much increased by unions and births not likely to be registered, it may be replied that such descents

belong rather to Indian than to Canadian genealogies.[1] A much more important fusion has taken place through intermarriages with the English, Scotch and Irish. The curious phenomenon is presented of neighborhoods and villages where the family names are Scotch, Irish or English, — people not a few, as an informant remarked, "who never could speak a word of English, descended from people who had never known a word of French." Dr. Kingsford, who is publishing an elaborate and valuable "History of Canada," attributes much importance to this absorption of foreign blood. He points out that at the time of the conquest the Canadian population numbered 60,000, of whom there were only about 15,000 males between sixteen and sixty years of age, and that by 1881, according to the census, there were in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario 1,176,563 French-Canadians. So great an increase he maintains could not have sprung from the men who yielded to the British invaders.[2] There has doubtless been a large absorption of foreign blood, yet the principal, the controlling strain is from the days of the French *régime* and from the sailors and farmers, the adventurers and soldiers, whose homes had been among the hills and on the plains and coasts of Brittany and Normandy and a few of the adjoining divisions of France.

Intelligent observers also claim that the Breton or Norman descent can still be plainly discriminated in particular districts or parishes. The Bretons are straight-forward, plain-spoken, strong-headed, even to obstinacy. A handshake over a bargain is as good as a bond. They are unsuspicious and easily deceived. The Normans are more polite, and somewhat slippery. Horse-traders, our informant

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[1] For further discussion of this question reference may be made to a paper by Benjamin Sulte, *Prétendues origines des Canadiens-Français*, in the *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 1885, Vol. III., Section I., pp. 13-28. For an article on the other side, see *ibid.*, Section II., pp. 1-21: "The Half-Breed," by John Reade.

[2] *The History of Canada*, Vol. IV., pp. 501-504.

added, know which parishes to visit. After receiving his account of the characteristics of certain parishes where the Normans prevailed we happened to light upon Mr. Freeman's inventory, in the *Encyclopœdia Britannica* of the qualities of the inhabitants of Normandy, and found the two descriptions almost identical in substance, with one important exception: Mr. Freeman, having in mind the Scandinavian conquerors of Normandy, the Northmen who gave to it its name, emphasizes their facility in being absorbed by other races. The Normans of the seventeenth century and their descendants in Canada seem to show the commingling with their Scandinavian parentage of a Gallic stock which is tenacious and persistent.

The parishes where the two sources can be distinguished, we suppose, are few and exceptional. The general French-Canadian type is formed by indiscriminate intermarriage among the early colonists. The people at large have clearly the usual French qualities, courtesy, vivacity, fondness for amusements, ready submission to traditional authority, adaptability, with a power of patient persistence for which not enough credit has been given. Their prolificness is phenomenal. Only in Prince Edward Island is the family ratio so high, either in the Dominion or the United States. From the beginnings of Canadian history, early marriages and large families have been promoted by rulers and priests. Louis the Fourteenth adopted vigorous and successful measures to secure these results. 'Cargoes of young women were regularly shipped to the colony. Any adult male not marrying was subjected to restriction. To be the father of a numerous family became a title to distinction and profit. The Archbishop of Paris instructed each *curé* in his diocese to learn what young women were willing to seek their fortunes in Canada. The King in their case certainly showed his beneficence. He not only trusted to the charms of these rustic beauties; but each one, on her marriage, was the recipient of a mark of royal favor: cattle, provisions, or the

means of constructing a house. Generally, in fifteen days, most of the new arrivals found partners, and the choice of a wife was enforced with all the auxiliaries of power. Young men who did not marry were forbidden to trade, hunt, or fish, or in any way enter the bush. The *Mère de l' Incarnation* tells us that as the selection was made, marriages were celebrated by thirties at the same ceremony. Nor was it by emigration alone that the promotion of marriage was attained. M. de Laval was called upon by the King to use his influence to induce the youth to marry at eighteen and the girls at sixteen. Twenty livres was the reward of the youth of twenty and of the girl of sixteen or under, who married. It was called *le présent du roi.* Fathers who did not marry their children were fined. A pension of three hundred livres [in a special edict] is promised to the *habitants* having ten children, no sex named; four hundred to those having twelve.' Such are the statements of a careful historian, Dr. Kingsford.[1] The policy thus begun is continued to the present time. Not long since the Quebec Legislature offered "a bounty of 100 acres of land to every head of a family of twelve living legitimate children." The first to avail himself of the offer was the speaker *pro tempore* of the legislature.[2] "Already," writes Dr. Prosper Bender, under date of July, 1890, "over one thousand applications have been made for the promised bounty." "In most homes" he further states, "there are from a dozen to sixteen children, and even as many as twenty-eight. Two prominent officials of the Province of Quebec are twenty-sixth children, and fine specimens of physical development and mental culture they are, too."[3] "The Speaker of the House of Commons is the twenty-fourth child of a twenty-

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[1] *History of Canada,* I., pp. 359-362.

[2] *Report submitted to the U. S. Senate by Mr. Hoar,* July 21, 1890, p. 1060.

[3] *Magazine of American History,* Aug. 1890, pp. 132-133.

fourth child."[1] The most impressive evidence of the expansion of the French population is given in the statistics of population for the Eastern and other English townships in the Province of Quebec. "In 1831," we quote from the *Toronto Mail*, March, 1890, as reprinted in Senator Hoar's Report,[2] "The eastern townships contained 37,964 Protestant, *i. e.*, British settlers, and 4,242 Roman Catholics, of whom about 1,200 were Irish Catholics, leaving the number of French-Canadians 3,000 or thereabouts. In 1844, * * the figures stood 48,398 British and 14,622 French; in 1851, 60,199 British and 34,066 French; in 1861, 76,317 British and 60,319 French; in 1871, 72,591 British and 83,705 French; and in 1881, * * 77,805 British and 109,042 French, * * * In the other four English counties, the figures stand thus: In 1861, the British population was 48,650; in 1871, 49,754; in 1881, 54,410; whereas the French population in these years was 23,620, 33,795, and 46,518 respectively." A gentleman, born in France, but educated after thirteen in Quebec, remarked to the writer that a Canadian mother, with say four young daughters, will do all the hard work herself in order that her daughters, especially if pretty (and the average of good looks is high), may not impair their attractiveness for marriage.[3]

Comparatively speaking there is a good standard of morality among these people. Mr. Winans, when before the select committee of the U. S. Senate on Relations with Canada, when asked his opinion on this subject replied: * * "The insurance actuaries say that if the moral condition of the people of the United States was as high as that of the people of the Dominion of Canada, they would get their insurance at two-thirds of the price they now have to pay."[4] He was asked at the same time concerning their intelligence,

[1] Senator Hoar's *Report*, p. 755. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 1056.

[3] For additional information, see President Amaron's *Your Heritage*, p. 42. *et seq.*

[4] *Report*, p. 760.

but does not appear to have covered this in his answer. There has been marked improvement of late years in the educational system, yet the mass of the people have had the most meagre school training, and many who come to us are deplorably ignorant.

Their civil and political training, until very recently, has been from the outset under the maxims of absolutism. The feudal system, though without the military obligation of the vassal to his lord, was set up at once, and remained in force down to within the lifetime of present proprietors and renters of the soil.[1] The King governed through the Provincial Governor, and especially the Intendant. "During the days of French domination in Canada" [1608–1760], says an eminent authority, Mr. Bourinot, "we look in vain for evidences of self-government in any form, such as we see in the town-meetings of Massachusetts and in the counties and parishes of Virginia, or in other divisions of the old English colonies in America, in all of which we can see the germs of liberty and free institutions from the earliest days of their history. The system of government that was established on the banks of the St. Lawrence was the very opposite of that to which the people of New England always clung as their most valued heritage. While the towns-folk of Massachusetts were discussing affairs in town-meeting, the French inhabitants of Canadà were never allowed to take part in public assemblies, but were taught to depend in the most trivial matters on a paternal government."[2] Nor was there any marked improvement or substantial change under British rule down to the time of Lord Durham, and the changes which took place in connection with the union of Upper and Lower Canada by the Act of 1840. More exactly, the period from 1845 to 1867 may be marked as the formative

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[1] The *seigneuries* came to an end in 1854.

[2] *Johns Hopkins Univ. Studies, Fifth Series,* V.-VI., 1887. "Local Government in Canada, etc.," by John George Bourinot, Clerk of the House of Commons of Canada, etc., etc.

one for municipal organization, with local responsibility and self-government. The immigrants who flock to us to-day, and still more those who have preceded them for twenty or twenty-five years past, have had little or no experience in that method of responsible local government in which we have been trained from the start; nor in their ancient civil constitution is there anything correspondent, not only to the old English parish system, but to that intermediate agency between the crown and the people supplied by the country gentry, and which in English history has helped to prepare for more democratic institutions and methods of government. The Canadian *seigneur* is no equivalent for an English baron, nor even for an English squire. Until very lately there has been in Quebec, in civil affairs, almost nothing in institutions and classes in society, to prepare for popular liberty and true self-government. One result of this history is that the suffrage now bestowed is used with but a vague and low sense of its responsibility. To a lamentable degree it is venal.

A parish system has been in existence from the early times, and with its dependencies, it has been the leading educational influence in an institutional way. The people who could not meet in civil assemblies, met within the church or on its steps. So far as the doctrine or practice of the irremovability of the *curé* at the will of the bishop obtained he was a representative of a sort of autonomy among his parishioners, however completely he ruled them. Such intellectual, moral or spiritual quickening as they received came through the services of the parish church. Its spire determined the parish. Every church had its *fabrique*, or board of trustees, and its *marguilliers*, or wardens. Civilly the country was ruled through the *curé*, the *seigneur*, and the *capitaine*. The circle of notables was likely to be larger for church affairs, and more diffusive of thought and the sense of community. Yet in this sphere, as in the civil and military, there was but little range for freedom of

action. The system of tithing for the support of religious institutions was early established. There has been a long and earnest dispute whether before the Quebec Act of 1774 such assessments had a legal force. A recent discovery of a royal edict is said to have settled the question affirmatively. Under this system all such dues were imposed without any consent direct or indirect of the party upon whom they fell. Taxation in the Church as in the State, and by the power of the State, was without representation. So that here too there was no effective or real autonomy even in respect to the secularities of religion.

Time does not permit any sketch of the history of municipal or parochial life in French Canada. A glance at some of their features as now constituted is all that can be attempted.

The Province is divided into twenty judicial circuits, and into sixty-five counties, or electoral districts. These are subdivided into cities, towns, parishes and villages.

A village is not a municipal corporation and has no proper council, but is regulated by that of the parish. Ordinarily it is the place where the church building is located, though sometimes there are two villages in a parish: one, where the church stands, that is the centre of religious administration; another, where the civil administration has its seat. As a rule the village is that part of the parish where the church is located, and the Commissioners' Court is held, a court which deals with all contested claims for twenty-five dollars or less, excepting actions for tort. The commissioners are three in number and are appointed by an order in Council, that is by the Lieutenant-Governor and his cabinet. At such a centre may be found the post-office and school-house, the priest, beadle and schoolmaster, the doctor and notary, the shoemaker and grocer.

Towns are incorporated by act of legislature. The law requires a population of 3,000, but this is not rigidly

enforced. It has power to appoint its own mayor and councillors, and to levy local taxes. The number of councillors depends on the number of *quartiers*, or districts, prescribed in the charter. The mayor is *ex-officio* a justice of the peace for cases originating in the town. With the councillors he is elected in January by the voters, who must have discharged their taxes, and must own property to the value of fifty dollars, or at least pay a rent of twenty dollars on land in town. Considerable interest is taken in the election, which has been enhanced by the fact that poor people have often secured the payment of their taxes by the candidates, though now that the secret ballot is introduced the transaction is not so sure in its issue as formerly. The experience of the people in municipal government is quite recent, not being fully entered upon until 1867. Every town and parish is represented by its mayor in a county council. The chairman of this council is called the warden. "It regulates," says Mr. Mercier,[1] "all questions interesting more than one municipality, decrees the erection of certain territory into municipalities [*i. e.*, associates certain sections for purposes of taxation in matters of common interest], and decides on appeal certain contestations arising out of affairs of the local municipalities." County roads are under the control of the county; what are called concession roads are under that of the parish.

A parish is a village or villages, or part of such, with the surrounding concessions, approved by the bishop of the diocese. The moment it has three hundred inhabitants it can become a municipality, or civil corporation, without resort to the legislature. It is organized for civil purposes by the choice, by the taxpayers, of seven councillors who elect from their own number a mayor.[2] The authority of

[1] *General Sketch of the Province of Quebec.* By Hon. Honoré Mercier, Premier of the Province. Quebec, 1889. [Published in *Canada: A Memorial Volume.* Montreal, 1889.]

[2] "The powers of the municipal councillors," says Mr. Mercier, "embrace the making and maintenance of roads, public works of a purely local nature, the levying and collection of municipal and school taxes, police matters, and the enforcement of certain laws concerning agriculture."

the Church plays a great part in the erection of parishes and parochial municipalities. This may be illustrated by the process pursued when a parish is to be divided, as this has been described to the writer. Some of the proprietors go informally to the bishop and ask for a division. The bishop asks, "How many inhabitants will there be in it? Get a petition signed by a majority of the requisite number [*i. e.*, 300] and I will establish a parish at once." The petitioners may be the smallest proprietors, and the poorest class of the inhabitants. The requisite number being assured, the bishop sends a note to the Commissioner, who calls a meeting of the freeholders of the locality where the new parish is to be set up. As soon as he is certified of a majority vote he makes a favorable report, a priest of the new parish is appointed at once and becomes head of the parish. Then a meeting is held of which the priest is *ex-officio* president. He can speak from the chair. *Syndics* or trustees are then appointed to look after the building of the parish church. Generally six are chosen, sometimes four, the priest having the balance of power. With the priest and the bishop they are the only officials to decide on the cost of the church. The plans and estimates are then made under the direction of the *syndics*, and when approved by the bishop, become the legal basis of assessment upon all rate-payers belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. The same method is pursued for the erection of the priest's house. The location of the church and presbytery is decided by the bishop. The assessments can be enforced at the rate of ten *per centum* per annum. These give rise to many mortgages on the real estate in the parish, which are held by the Church. This has been an effective instrument in the encroachment of the French-Canadian agricultural population on the English. The Church controls the land.

Within the parish is the *fabrique*, a term in universal use, and of legal force, which no one seems able to define.

It is a legal corporation, levies taxes collectible by law, and more perhaps than any other institution has maintained in the Canadian communities the little force or measure of autonomy which has obtained. It is supposed to be formed of the *curé* or parish priest and the *marguilliers*. The main function of the *fabrique* is to assess the rates for the Church administration of the parish, the so-called *casuel*, including warming and lighting the church building, and fees for a multiplicity of priestly services. Once a year the *marguilliers* accompany the priest in his visit to the families of his flock and receive a collection, nominally at least, voluntary. They go round in a large sleigh for the *quête de l' Enfant Jesu*. The *marguilliers* are elected, one each year, for a term of three years. The oldest in office is president of the body.

In conclusion we would emphasize these points.

1. The French-Canadians have come to stay. The tenacity of the race is historically demonstrated. The Romans conquered the Gauls, but the Gauls absorbed their conquerors. The Scandinavians took possession of Normandy, gave it its name, and impressed their characteristic qualities, which remain to-day with a certain distinctness in parishes and districts in Canada. Yet there is a staying power in these people which seems to spring from the stock into which the Northmen were engrafted. The Franks, before this Danish invasion, came and ruled, but France and Germany are almost as distinct to-day in racial peculiarities as the ancient Gauls and Romans. And on this continent the British conquest of Canada is leaving less and less traces of itself in the population of Quebec. This province is becoming more and more thoroughly and completely French.

2. So that we must say, secondly, Canadians have come to remain, for a long time certainly, *French* Canadians. The force of their past history, the constant pressure, impulse and direction of their trusted leaders, will keep them to this national unity. They are not like people separated

by thousands of miles from the lands of their nativity or origin. Their countrymen press hard upon the thin, invisible line which separates the Province of Quebec from Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. The old English counties are filling up from the French parishes north of the St. Lawrence. The overflow from the same districts is not restrained by any geographical or political boundary. Soon the parishes south of the St. Lawrence will run over. Meanwhile a parochial organization will have been thoroughly established reaching up from Connecticut to the border, and meeting a similar one there covering the entire province. A living inter-communion of this sort is an immense force for the preservation of the national traits, language, and customs.

If possible, the priests, so far as organization can effect this, are more in control with us, than in Quebec. The parish is transplanted, but not the *fabrique*. All the church property of a parish is in the hands of the priest, or his ecclesiastical superiors. One thing is wanting, the system of tithes, with its first lien upon the land. The discovery, if it be such, that this was in force as civil law before the conquest, helps to fasten this on Quebec, under its present allegiance. For though the Act of Quebec reserves the supremacy of the Crown, it guarantees to the Roman Catholic Church under this limitation, all the "dues and rights," with respect to its own followers, which existed under the French *Régime*. This falls away the moment the parish crosses the line and enters New England. But no one acquainted with the powers wielded by the Roman Catholic priesthood over these people as they come to us can anticipate much change for a long time on this account. The money for churches, schools and convents is forthcoming without the *fabrique* and without legal tithes.

3. And this population, organized and moving, as it were, in a solid and disciplined column, has come to multiply. Not so fast as at home, we may believe, by natural

increase, but still largely thus, and also by constant reenforcement. The domestic policy has greatly changed. Once Bishop De Goesbriand could obtain priests only from France. Now Father Hamon's book appears under the approval of Cardinal Taschereau.

We have thus rapidly developing among us an organized community opposed to Americanization, secluded by all possible effort on the part of its leaders from the assimilating influences which affect other immigrants, and having on its banners the inscription: *Notre Religion, Notre Langue, et nos Mœurs.* It is an organization ruled by a principle diametrically opposed to that which our fathers brought to these shores, and which has made New England what it is. The one depresses to the lowest point possible what the other exalted to the highest, the principle of personal responsibility with the freedom which this involves.

We have no criticism to pass upon men of another faith for being loyal to their convictions, we recognize their purpose to be loyal to our flag, we would have them enjoy all the guarantees our Constitution and civilization provide of civil and religious liberty. We would incite no religious or civil crusade, nor play the rôle of alarmists. We would use only the weapons of truth and light. But light there must be; for in it, under the blessing of Him who gives it, is our national security. Shall not the scholars of America see to it, so far as they may, that the common-school system shall remain a bond of union, a common principle, and not become a question for political division?

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