

of 1791 gave, when it divided them; and that, once fairly in operation, it cannot fail to work the greatest and most beneficial changes in behalf of both Provinces, the Lower no less than the Upper. We are therefore well contented to meet its opponents on the ground they have themselves chosen,—the Lower Canadian aspect of the case. It is easy to show that the views of those parties in Lower Canada who regard the Union with distrust, are utterly erroneous; and that in point of fact the real tendencies of the measure, as regards their Province and themselves, so far from being what their fears or prejudices, or both, have led them to ascribe to it, are precisely those which they ought most to desire for their own advantage. This point established, the whole argument against the Union which has been founded on Lower Canadian considerations, at once falls to the ground.

Every political dispute in Lower Canada, as we presume our readers are well aware, resolves itself just now, in one way or another, into the all-comprehending quarrel of the rival races, and it is thus a thing of course, that on a subject of such paramount importance as the re-union, the views and feelings of the two races should be of the most opposite character. Neither of them, it is true, is quite unanimous in its decision for or against the Act; but this fact is far from constituting the case an exception to the rule. The immense majority of one race stand opposed to the majority of the other; the one strongly favouring the measure, the other hostile to it. Nor is this all. With exceptions too few to be worth taking into account, there is not the slightest sympathy between the two classes thus accidentally thrown together into opposition to the same measure. The man of British origin who questions the sufficiency of the Act, does so from the plenitude of the distrust with which he looks upon the French Canadian race,—that portion of it most especially which is itself most adverse to the re-union. And the anti-unionist of that race, in return, is strong in his repugnance to the proposed change, precisely in proportion to the strength of his dislike of all those consequences, for the sake of which his neighbours of British extraction mostly desire it, and which the anti-union minority of their number fear may never follow from it.

We have, then, to deal with two distinct classes of objections. Before proceeding, how-

ever, to consider them in detail, it becomes necessary first to define, in as few words as may be, their precise character, and—in order to do this—the position of the parties who advance them.

The history of the rise and progress of the “British party” in Lower Canada, as it has now for some years been called, must be too familiar to our readers in general, to require to be here more than glanced at. The national feud which has of late been carried to such lengths in the Province, has had its origin in the joint operation of two causes; the first, the short-sighted policy of the Quebec Act of 1774, which, after a short *quasi*-introduction of the English language and laws into the then newly conquered territory, suddenly undertook to establish and perpetuate in it all the peculiarities of the French colonial system; the second, the no less short-sighted policy which dictated the Constitution of 1791, and the early practices of the Colonial administration under it.—When the country was first permanently ceded, its whole population numbered about 70,000; and nothing could then have been much easier than to have assimilated this handful of men, in their language and general habits of feeling, to the great body of the nation of which they were from that time to form a part. The opportunity was, however, thrown away. Eleven years were lost in indecision, and then the old system was formally adopted, and any slight tendencies towards assimilation, which had begun to develop themselves, at once arrested. Seventeen more years elapse. In 1791 the inhabitants of Lower Canada, of French extraction, are 100,000 in number, constituting still almost the whole population, and as little changed from what they had been under the French *regime*, as it is well possible to imagine. A Constitution is given. For the first time they are called upon to take part in their own government; and a House of Assembly is summoned, to be elected by them under a franchise in effect almost universal.—This new body is to be, in theory, the “House of Commons” of the Colony. Its rights, privileges and powers are limited, on the face of the constitutional act; only as those of its Imperial counterpart, the House of Commons meeting in Westminster, are limited,—by the existence of a second legislative body, and the veto of the Crown. In practice, however, returned by a small community, unused to self-government of