

confederacy; or, if they are able, by effecting a separation singly, and so either merging in the American Union, or keeping up for a few years a wretched semblance of feeble independence, which would expose them more than ever to the intrusion of the surrounding population. I am far from wishing to encourage indiscriminately these pretensions to superiority on the part of any particular race; but while the greater part of every portion of the American continent is still uncleared and unoccupied, and while the English exhibit such constant and marked activity in colonization, so long will it be idle to imagine that there is any portion of that continent into which that race will not penetrate, or in which, when it has penetrated, it will not predominate. It is but a question of time and mode—it is but to determine whether the small number of French, who now inhabit Lower Canada, shall be made English under a government which can protect them, or whether the process shall be delayed, until a much larger number shall have to undergo, at the rude hands of its uncontrolled rivals, the extinction of a nationality strengthened and embittered by continuance.

And is this French Canadian nationality one which, for the good merely of that people, we ought to strive to perpetuate, even if it were possible? I know of no national distinctions marking and continuing a more hopeless inferiority. The language, the laws, the character of the North American continent are English; and every race but the English (I apply this to all who speak the English language) appears there in a condition of inferiority. It is to elevate them from that inferiority that I desire to give to the Canadians our English character. I desire it for the sake of the educated classes, whom the distinction of language and manners keeps apart from the great empire to which they belong. At the best, the fate of the educated and aspiring colonist is, at present, one of little hope, and little activity; but the French Canadian is cast still further into the shade by a language and habits foreign to those of the Imperial government. A spirit of exclusion has closed the higher professions on the educated classes of the French Canadians, more perhaps than was absolutely necessary; but it is impossible for the utmost liberality on the part of the British government, to give an equal position in the general competition of its vast population to those who speak a foreign language. I desire the amalgamation still more for the sake of the humbler classes. Their present state of rude and equal plenty is fast deteriorating under the pressure of population in the narrow limits to which they are confined. If they attempt to better their condition, by extending themselves over the neighbouring country, they will necessarily get more and more mingled with an English population; if they prefer remaining stationary, the greater part of them must be labourers, in the employ of English capitalists. In either case it would appear, that the great mass of the French Canadians are doomed, in some measure, to occupy an inferior position, and to be dependent on the English for employment. The evils of poverty and dependence would merely be aggravated in a ten-fold degree, by a spirit of jealous and resentful nationality, which should separate the working class of the community, from the possessors of wealth and employers of labour.

I will not here enter into the question of the effect of the mode of life and division of property among the French Canadians on the happiness of the people. I will admit, for the moment, that it is as productive of well-being as its admirers assert. But, be it good or bad, the period in which it is practicable is past; for there is not enough unoccupied land left in that portion of the country in which English are not already settled, to admit of the present French population possessing farms sufficient to supply them with their present means of comfort, under their system of husbandry. No population has increased by mere births so rapidly as that of the French Canadians has since the conquest. At that period their number was estimated at 60,000; it is now supposed to amount to more than seven times as many.—There has been no proportional increase of cultivation, or of produce from the land already under cultivation; and the increased population has been, in a great measure, provided for by the mere continued sub-division of estates. In a report from a committee in the Assembly in 1826, of which Mr. Andrew Stuart was chairman, it is stated, that since 1784 the population of the seignories had quadrupled, while the number of cattle had only doubled, and the quantity of land in cultivation had only increased one-third. Complaints of distress are constant, and the deterioration of the condition of a great part of the population admitted on all hands. A people so circumstanced must alter their mode of life. If they wish to maintain the same kind of rude, but well-provided agricultural existence, it must be by removing into those parts of the country in which the English are settled; or if they cling to their present residence, they can only obtain a livelihood by deserting their present employment, and working for wages on farms, or in commercial occupations under English capitalists. But their present proprietary and inactive condition is one which no political arrangements can perpet-