

adopt new ideas. The scientific progress of the day is sometimes too rapid for him to follow, since he has little inclination for change of any kind. Tyndall and Huxley are to him strange names, and Darwin is never seen on the tables of the French Canadian. The new philosophies of France are studied only in secret by a few zealous inquirers after knowledge. The Church supervises with a zealous care the mental food that is offered for the nourishment of the people in the rural districts, where it exercises the greatest influence. Agnosticism is a word practically unknown in the vocabulary of the French Canadian, who is quite ready to adhere without wavering to the old belief which his forefathers professed. Relics and miracles are still the subjects of his belief and veneration; and though the young have their doubts, they are too sensible to say what may mar their social or political prospects. Whilst the French Canadians doubtless lose little by refusing to listen to the teachings which would destroy all old established and venerable institutions, and lead them into an unknown country of useless speculation, they perhaps carry their dislike for free discussion at times to extremes, and do not allow their minds sufficient scope and expansion.

Nearly half a century ago, a distinguished English statesman, the Earl of Durham, wrote in his report on the state of Canada that the French Canadians 'are a people without a history and a literature.' It is a great mistake, however, to suppose that the province of Quebec does not possess a history replete with interest. It is only necessary to read the works of that brilliant American historian, Francis Parkman, to be satisfied that the annals of New France are in some respects as attractive as the pages of a Froissart or a Prescott. Where in history can be found a chapter of more absorbing interest than that which describes the courage and daring of the adventurous La Salle in his journey down the Mississippi, which he followed from its headquarters to the Gulf of Mexico. The discoveries of this explorer have had a more momentous effect on the world's history than the exploits of a Bayard or a Du Guesclin, to whom so many eloquent pages of history and romance have been devoted. Everywhere in Canada do we find some evidence of his famous