

such absolute intolerance as thinking men cannot endure; and it will be pressed more and more, until there is a reaction which one does not care to contemplate. Already there is a destructive power of infidelity in the bosom of the Church which cannot be trifled with. Hundreds and thousands have lost all confidence in her dogmas, and retain nominal connection with her through social and business considerations, their wish being not to strengthen but to destroy her. We have heard a leading advocate, representing a class of educated men daily becoming more numerous and influential, emphatically declare that he remained in the Church only to be able effectually to stab her in the heart at the proper moment. Our despotic ecclesiastics might well learn a lesson for the hour from the tragic history of France.

We do not say that in French Canada we have a Voltaire—a man of piercing intellect hurling his envenomed shafts alike against truth and tyranny; or a Montesquieu teaching the people the true principles of national freedom; or a Diderot and D'Alembert issuing another revolutionary encyclopædia—nor do we anticipate in any sense a repetition of the horrors of the Revolution; but the forces of unbelief within the Church are undoubtedly arrayed against the Hierarchy, and are steadily gaining strength. And just as France in her madness, led by a swarming and all-powerful priesthood under the reign of the dissolute Louis XV., in attempting to cleanse the land of heresy, persecuted with diabolical cruelty and drove from her borders the most industrious and virtuous of the people, so the priests of Canada are effectually bringing about the end of their own rule by a similar although much milder process. The thousands of the people who are driven into exile by the burdens pressing so heavily upon them are doing much indirectly to break up the despotism. Mr. John Lowe, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa, remarks, in a recent volume on Canadian Economics, that "there has been a French Canadian emigration to the United States of from 300,000 to 500,000—certainly a large aggregate to have sprung from the few settlers on the banks of the St. Lawrence and in Acadie" (p. 214). These exiles soon wake up to the fact that they are free from the forms of legal oppression to which the Church subjected them in Canada. Those of them who can write send

back many letters telling of the freedom they enjoy. These epistles are most annoying to the priests, who denounce them as pestiferous fifth. But they are passed round the parishes, notwithstanding, and do their work, being probably read all the more eagerly because of priestly interdiction, for the descendants of Eve have a ravenous appetite for forbidden fruit. Many of these exiles also return frequently to see their friends and native country. After a few years' absence they are much changed in appearance, in sentiment, and speech. They use the vigorous language of the Anglo-Saxons and have, in some measure, imbibed his modes of thought and unconquerable love of freedom. They have lost their old profound reverence for the omnipotent Cure. They go about their native villages attracting attention by every movement, and freely giving out new ideas, uttering opinions that jar against their former environment. What can the priests do? They are helpless, and cannot prevent the irreparable mischief their people suffer by getting beyond the Chinese wall which ecclesiastical hands would build round this province, and by being scattered in the neighboring Republic. The Confessions made by Roman Catholics authors as to losses sustained by the Church in the United States are explicit, numerous, and significant, and seem to show that the genius of Republicanism, with its national schools such as are now adopted even in France, is hostile to Romanism. We cite a few specimens. The Rev. E. A. Reiter, Jesuit Father, in the Catholic Year Book for 1869, estimates the whole number of Catholics in the United States at 3,354,000, "which is less than is commonly thought." "If to these," he says, "are added the incredibly large number of those who, after their arrival in this country, have only to soon thrown off their Catholic faith, we may with good reason, as the judgment of those who know, and my experience of fifteen years has taught me, add one half to the number above, which would bring it to 5,031,000. Yet such cannot now or ever be taken into account, as in this country nothing is more seldom than a backslidden Catholic ever to be reclaimed, even on his death-bed" (pp. 6, 7). In 1870 the *St. Peter's* newspaper placed the Catholic population of the United States at ten millions, but the *Catholic Telegraph*, of Cincinnati, modified the statement to the effect that it