

contempt, but they were absolved from their allegiance by his lack of faith, and in numerous instances in the history of the Middle Ages, crowned by cast him from the throne he had shown himself an unworthy to possess.

Thus there was built up a ruling class in all these states founded on loyalty and honor, while the spirit of justice was the greatest incentive to the sovereign because it was the surest prop of his powers among his knightly supporters.

The society of the feudal age, by those motives and assurances became rivaline with a civility that, as Hallam says in his *History of the Middle Ages*, "caused the heart to expand like a flower in the sunshine; beautified glory with generosity and smoothed even the rugged brow of war."

Many of the states which made up the country afterwards known as France, were sovereign within themselves down to beyond the time of the colonization of Canada. The principal of these states named for the ancient races that founded them, were Normandy, for the Normans, Brittany, for the Bretons, Gascony, for the Gascons, Burgundy, for the Burgundians. Many of these states or provinces of France, had their separate parliaments, each had its own constitution of which the customary law of its people was an interpretation.

Some of these provinces, whose great chieftains were the peers of France that is sovereigns with the king—had counsel by intermarriage or by failure of issue in the direct line of the original family, to the Royal House and had become the appendages of its junior branches.

So long as the monarchy existed in France, that is until 1793, a hundred and twenty-eight years after the establishment of Canada as an autonomous royal province, all the provinces of France, including Canada, preserved their characteristic of a feudal state—an internal sovereignty, organization and independence. The general government of the kingdom of which these provinces were the units was managed by the king and officers called by him to assist him in council for affairs of the royal provinces, but there were added to these offices the feudal chief of each of the other provinces—that were not directly under the king—because the king and his officers could not interfere in the management of these other provinces without the consent of the lords of those provinces.

Before these chiefs, as peers of the king in council, were summoned, the king,

with the advice of his personal court, would issue commands to be observed to the lords and retainers of his personals, but he would send letters to the sovereign chiefs of the other provinces requesting them to have the king's ordinances enforced in their domains. It was to avoid the non-compliance with the king's requests on the part of the great vassals, which caused the king to invite them as peers to sit in his council so as to insure the carrying out of the legislation of that council in the confederated provinces which formed the kingdom of France. The sovereign lord of each of these provinces such as Normandy, Aquitaine, Brittany divided up according to the feudal custom the land of their domains among their relatives, officers and gallant followers to hold in trust to such tenants as might in their turn have smaller holdings of these subordinate lords. The bond between them all was this, that the tenant must fulfill his agreement with his lord, his lord with the chief and the chief with the king. The lord, on his side, must protect his tenant, the chief, his lord, and the king, the chief.

The lord could make no legal change in the agreement of his tenants without their consent, so when he considered the regulation and improvement of his lordship he opened a room in his house for the assembly of his tenants, so that their wishes might be made known to him in the matter. In like manner the chief of the province, whether duke or count, assembled a council of the lords of the province in his castle to obtain their consent for any change which he might make. This council with the duke of the province made the provincial laws. But as the lords, better versed in the military art than in the ancient customs and the financial conditions of the cities, required further assistance, certain of the magistrates and presidents of the merchant-guilds of towns were invited to meet in a separate place as a court of decision. This court of justice was the provincial parliament; its office being to register the laws passed by the duke in council and to judge of causes brought before it. But never in the history of any part of monarchical France did it have the power to legislate. The nearest approach to legislation that even its most audacious temper assumed was in way of remonstrance against grievances.

The duchy of France—outside of Normandy, Brittany and the other provinces—was the province peculiar to the royal