

teachings put into the mouth of the Pope by the Jesuits, who for years had the complete control of his mind and conscience, had been given the seal and authority of an article of faith, the civilized world was alarmed ; but to Canada the note of warning came too late,—Confederation had been passed. The priests in the Province of Quebec, emulating the struggle which the Church all the world over is now making to establish its unquestioned superiority over all civil government, according to the teaching of the Syllabus, were not slow in availing themselves of the peculiar advantages which their position in Canada necessarily gave them. At the time of the Conquest, the Roman Catholic priesthood were under the dominion and subject to the control of the civil power, as they always have been in France. The bishops were named by the Crown, and the priests, as they are still by law supposed to be, were permanently appointed to their various parishes, and could only be removed for cause duly established before a competent tribunal. The consequence was an enlightened and independent clergy, who dared to think for themselves and act for themselves, and not the trembling missionaries who to-day have taken their places, completely at the mercy of the bishops and liable at any moment to be punished for independence of word or action by the loss of their living. The change came about naturally and simply; the treaty of 1763 secured to Canadians the free exercise of their religion in so far as the laws of Great Britain permitted ; but in consequence of the cruel enactments with which the British statutes were replete against priests found in the British possessions, it was deemed advisable by the early governments to ignore as much as possible the Roman Catholic priesthood, and they were allowed to follow their own courses to a great extent unnoticed and unmolested ; though the bishops were

sworn in with all due solemnity and made take the usual oaths of allegiance, and in so far recognized the authority of the civil power—a very slight form of submission from which they have freed themselves since. The bishops were not slow in seizing the opportunity thus afforded them of strengthening their power, and ceased naming parish priests to the various livings as they fell in, substituting missionaries, whom they could recall at pleasure. The policy of the princes of the Church has always been as much as possible to crush out anything like an approach to freedom of act or thought in those holding a lower rank in the priesthood, and nothing can be more absolute than the thralldom in which the whole parish clergy is, at this hour, held by the bishops of the Province of Quebec ; and that in open defiance of the express letter of the law. Such being the state of affairs, and their power being thoroughly secured, immediately after the establishment of confederation the bishops resolved to make a bold move to seize the reins of government, which resulted in the Programme, the joint production of the bishops of Three Rivers, Montreal, and St. Hyacinthe. The Programme is an absolute prohibition to vote for a Protestant when a Roman Catholic is in the field. It was the first step in the way laid out, and has since been followed by pastoral letters directed not only against Protestants, but further against all Roman Catholic Liberals. When first it was promulgated the Programme naturally raised a storm ; its doctrines appeared so extraordinary and its tendencies so utterly at variance with the enjoyment of civil liberty and the freedom of electoral franchise, as to stamp it at once as a bigoted and unconstitutional attack upon the rights and privileges of the Protestant portion of the community which would not and could not be tamely submitted to, and which, as tending to inflame national and religious