

laws of inheritance, and the absence of any means of accumulation, by commerce or manufactures, have produced a remarkable equality of properties and conditions. A few seignorial families possess large, though not often very valuable properties; the class entirely dependent on wages is very small; the bulk of the population is composed of the hard-working yeomanry of the country districts, commonly called *habitans*, and their connexions engaged in other occupations. It is impossible to exaggerate the want of education among the *habitans*; no means of instruction have ever been provided for them, and they are almost universally destitute of the qualifications even of reading and writing. It came to my knowledge that out of a great number of boys and girls assembled at the school-house door of St. Thomas, all but three admitted, on inquiry, that they could not read. Yet the children of this large parish attend school regularly, and actually make use of books. They hold the catechism book in their hand, as if they were reading, while they only repeat its contents, which they know by rote. The common assertion, however, that all classes of the Canadians are equally ignorant, is perfectly erroneous; for I know of no people among whom a larger provision exists for the higher kinds of elementary education, or among whom such education is really extended to a larger proportion of the population. The piety and benevolence of the early possessors of the country founded, in the seminaries that exist in different parts of the Province, institutions, of which the funds and activity have long been directed to the promotion of education. Seminaries and colleges have been, by these bodies, established in the cities, and in other central points. The education given in these establishments greatly resembles the kind given in the English public schools, though it is rather more varied. It is entirely in the hands of the Catholic clergy. The number of pupils in these establishments is estimated altogether at about a thousand; and they turn out every year, as far as I could ascertain, between two and three hundred young men thus educated. Almost all of these are members of the family of some *habitant*, whom the possession of greater quickness than his brothers has induced the father or the curate of the parish to select and send to the seminary. These young men possessing a degree of information immeasurably superior to that of their families, are naturally averse to what they regard as descending to the humble occupations of their parents. A few become priests; but as the military and naval professions are closed against the colonist, the greater part can only find a position suited to their notions of their own qualifications in the learned professions of advocate, notary and surgeon. As from this cause these professions are greatly overstocked, we find every village in Lower Canada filled with notaries and surgeons, with little practice to occupy their attention, and living among their own families, or at any rate among exactly the same class. Thus the persons of most education in every village belong to the same families, and the same original station in life, as the illiterate *habitans* whom I have described. They are connected with them by all the associations of early youth, and the ties of blood. The most perfect equality always marks their intercourse, and the superior in education is separated by no barrier of manners, or pride, or distinct interests, from the singularly ignorant peasantry by which he is surrounded. He combines, therefore, the influences of superior knowledge and social equality, and wields a power over the mass, which I do not believe that the educated class of any other portion of the world possess. To this singular state of things I attribute the extraordinary influence of the Canadian demagogues. The most uninstructed population any where trusted with political power, is thus placed in the hands of a small body of instructed persons, in whom it reposes the confidence which nothing but such domestic connexion, and such community of interest could generate. Over the class of persons by whom the peasantry are thus led, the Government has not acquired, or ever laboured to acquire, influence; its members have been thrown into opposition by the system of exclusion, long prevalent in the colony; and it is by their agency that the leaders of the Assembly have been enabled hitherto to move as one mass, in whatever direction they thought proper, the simple and ductile population of the country. The entire neglect of education by the Government has thus, more than any other cause, contributed to render this people ungovernable, and to invest the agitator with the power, which he wields against the laws and the public tranquillity.

Among this people, the progress of emigration has of late years introduced a Conduct of the English population, exhibiting the characteristics with which we are familiar, as English. those of the most enterprising of every class of our countrymen. The circumstances