

DIS-FRENCHISING CANADIANS

Chapter IV.—How the Seeds of Dissension Were Planted

WHILE the English-speaking American colonies, without exception, threw off their allegiance to the mother land in the American Revolution, not all the colonists were disloyal. It has been estimated that about a million of the three million colonists disapproved of an armed revolution, yet only a few thousand ventured to serve in the British army.

During the war the families of those who cast in their lot with the royal cause, were subjected to great hardships; after the war the Loyalist families were by State acts of banishment sent into exile and their property confiscated. "Why should persons who are preying upon the vitals of their country," wrote the Governor of Connecticut, "be suffered to remain at large whilst we know they will do us every mischief in their power?" There were Loyalists who, at this stage, gave up their principles and retained their property; others gave up everything except principle, and returned to the mother land, or migrated to the islands retained by Great Britain, to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, or to Canada, and commenced life over again.

It will be remembered that until this time Canada had continued almost exclusively French. The British criminal law had been introduced by the Quebec Act, but in other respects the conditions of the colony continued much as they were under the French regime. When English joined French in Canada the country became bilingual.

"And then the trouble began," interrupted Price Green, who as an Englishman may be excused for not being familiar with the finer points of Canadian history.

Green's conclusion is the almost general opinion of this day, but the facts of history do not bear it out. At that time the French in Canada were regarded as a blessing, perhaps in disguise, but still a blessing. They gave the country an individuality which set it apart from the more populous English-speaking republic to the south. The newly-formed government of the United States was still to be tried out and no one knew what its relations would eventually be with British North America. Men reasoned that there was nothing—except the French-Canadians—to prevent the former disloyal colonists from migrating to Upper Canada, and by their influence accomplishing that which force of arms had failed to do, namely, the wresting of the land north of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence from the British. Bilingualism was considered the best safeguard against what my friend, John R. Robinson, of the "Toronto Telegram," was pleased to call Continentalism in the days of the reciprocity debate.

In truth there was scant reason for a quarrel between French and English in the first days of settlement after the war. The men whom Fate had brought together in the wilderness of the great Northland at the close of the eighteenth century, had much in common, whether of French or of English tongue. For one thing, they were both Royalists and Loyalists.

THE English-speaking settlers who had come from the old American colonies during the War of the Revolution, or from the United States after the Declaration of Independence, were proud of sacrifices made for King and Empire; and at one time it was seriously represented that they should form a Canadian aristocracy. Naturally, with this claim forward, a clear definition of the term, "United Empire Loyalists" became necessary. W. S. Herrington, the author of an interesting little book describing the pioneer life of the Loyalists in Upper Canada, gives this definition of the phrase: "The appellation, United Empire Loyalists, was bestowed upon those who had taken their stand for the unity of the Empire, and who had allied themselves with the Royalists before the Treaty of Separation in 1783."

When I had read the definition over to my friend, Price Green, as we worked together in my library one night, he asked:

"Is not that definition wide enough to include the French-Canadians almost to a man?"

"Why not?" was my reply. "Loyalty to the British Empire is surely as commendable in French as in English, in a race as in an individual."

Yet the hard fact remains that the names of French Colonial Loyalist families have not been handed down to posterity. Is it because there were no French Colonial Disloyalists?

By WILLIAM H. MOORE

The men of English and French race who had chosen to be British, bitterly knew the meaning of war. Common hardships drew them together in bonds of sympathy during the first years of their common habitation of the Northland. If men had talked to them of the necessity of homogeneity in language—and perhaps they did—the answer would have been: "It was only yesterday that in a nearby land English-speaking men threw off their allegiance to the British Crown, plundered and shot down their English-speaking neighbours, brutally maltreated women and children of English parentage." When we remember that these things were burnt into the memory of the people who inhabited Upper Canada—and the scars were still unhealed—it will not seem strange that an Anglicizing crucible looked like any thing but a panacea for state ills.

"You ought to say something about the Civil War between Northern and Southern States, in which English-speaking foes were matched against each other," again interrupted Green.

"Even to-day, men of common language are fighting in opposing trenches," I assented. "As we shall see later, a common language was never a guarantee of peace. But we must not be led away from our study of Canadian history."

In these first days the hospitality of the Canadian wilderness was proverbial. There were few inns. The stranger—be he English or French—was made welcome in the home; and the guest of to-day was the host of to-morrow. The fires were kept burning under the kettle; pea-soup and soupe-aux-pois, served in the rough-hewn log-houses, were one and the same thing to the hungry traveller. There was a difference between French and English, it is true, but it was that between p-e-a-s and p-o-i-s. Throughout the land there was a spirit of the brotherhood of man which, with the growth of population and the herding of men in cities, has become only a thing of meaningless words.

AS recorded in the history of that period, the Recollet Fathers placed a church at the disposal of the Presbyterians whilst their place of worship was being built. The Presbyterians were grateful, as was to be expected, and recorded their acknowledgment of the kindness in one of the first minutes of their church meeting, presenting the Fathers with "one box of candles, 56 lbs., at 8d., and one hogshead of Spanish wine, at £6, 5s." The preservation of the details may be regarded as an illustration of true Scottish thrift, but the incident itself stands among the monuments, marking the relations between French and English, Catholic and Protestant, in the days before politicians and editors became directors of public sentiment.

And then arose discord; and, as we shall see, it came not first as a clash between English and French Loyalists.

As the stream of Loyalist refugees from the United States diminished and finally ceased, there came, an English historian tells us, others, "whose loyalty consisted in an unremitting attention to their own personal interests, and who were attracted from the Republic by the more material consideration of good cheap land; and the British Isles supplied a third stream of settlers of the yeomen and labouring classes, whose sturdy virtues and steady energy assured them a position of far greater independence and comfort than they could ever have obtained in the land of their birth."

These later immigrants knew little of the traditions of the country and cared naught for the obligations to French-Canadian loyalty which had preserved it to the Crown. The newcomers, most of them sturdy Protestants, looked askance at their French-Catholic neighbours; but not yet was the main feud between Catholic and Protestant, French and English. Many of the immigrants were from the United States and had recently laid down the arms of rebellion. Upon them the United Empire Loyalists poured out their pent-up wrath for losses and hardships suffered in rebellion days. "Some of the extreme Loyalists could not reconcile Methodism and Loyalty to the Crown," says Herrington. And the records inform us of more than one persecution for preaching the doctrines of the Methodist Church. In fact, one duly-elected member of the Legislative Assembly was refused his seat in the

House because he had upon occasions filled the pulpit of the Methodists.

"INTOLERANCE is an internal malady which vents its poison upon the first object by which it is excited," was Price Green's comment, as I read aloud the tale of this almost-forgotten episode in Canadian history.

"If we hadn't the French, or the French hadn't us, if we all spoke the same language, whether French or English, we should still have intolerance," I replied. "Those afflicted would then break forth upon the men of their own race and religion. There is always a nearby object for the intolerant-minded. You will remember, Green, the Puritans fled from England to escape intolerance. They had hardly become settled when they set about the persecution of the Quakers, albeit their own English-speaking countrymen, mutilated them, broke them on the wheels of their waggons and drove them from the colony. Remember, in the New World greater atrocities have been committed by English-Protestant on English-Protestant, than by English-Protestant on French-Catholic or French-Catholic on English-Protestant. Intolerance is by no means measurable by the extent of difference. I wonder if, after all, there is a cure for it?"

"The Golden Rule. The Golden Rule applied to the every-day things of life," was Green's reply. But Price Green is a keen churchman, a sidesman for the Anglicans out Mimico way, and looks upon Christian precepts as work-a-day rules, and best of all comes within hailing distance of living up to them himself.

However, I must not forget that we are on a quest for facts connected with the early history of Upper Canada.

Shortly after the commencement of the nineteenth century the Irish came, driven by distress from the tight, little, green island. The Bishop of Limerick of that day placed the situation in the home land graphically before the select committee appointed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom to consider measures for relief. Said the Bishop: "Take any system of home relief, it must be gradual in its operation; before it can be brought to bear the present sufferers will have died off, and others will have supplied their place, but not without a dreadful course of intermediate horrors. No, emigration is an instantaneous relief, it is what bleeding would be to an apoplectic patient. The sufferers are at once taken away; and, be it observed, from a country where they are a nuisance and a pest to a country where they will be a benefit and a blessing."

Limerick's bishop was a prophet. The Irish have been a blessing to this country; but, because of their peculiar faculty for disturbing, they have never conspicuously contributed to its harmony. The French-Canadians received the Catholic Irish immigrants as they landed, hungry and worn from weeks of ocean voyage, fed and cared for them, and French priests ministered to their spiritual comfort. "Here at last we have found brothers," thought the French-Canadian. But no sooner were the Irish rested and settled than they took an active part in the domestic broils; and, with proverbial impartiality, frequently sided against their benefactors and co-religionists. But that was not all. The Protestant Irish brought with them the memory of bitter religious feuds and a secret organization for their perpetuation, planting both in the land of their adoption.

When North America settled back into its hundred years of peace and the soldier made his exit from the stage, the politician was cast for the leading part. And in the first days the politicians formed a veritable caste. They were men apart from the great mass of the people, for it must be remembered that for several decades after the war there was no representative government. The people followed their work of home-building, unaffected by the prejudices which the politicians then, as always, sought to create in the hope of covering up their designs upon coveted places of power.

WHEN in the second days, representative government had been introduced and the politicians represented the people, their efforts to embroil the different classes, sects, and races, in domestic strife, were continued with even greater vigour and, unhappily, with more success. Then, as now, the man appointed to public position was not always, as

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