

THE FRENCH-CANADIAN PEOPLE.

Although the French-Canadian people are well known, having dwelt in the Province of Quebec for over three centuries, opinions as to their real character differ widely.

Some look upon them as a race of half-breeds, many of whom have more or less Indian blood in their veins. Hence the prevailing black color of their skin, eyes and hair.

There is no doubt that many of the first French settlers smoked the pipe of peace with their Indian neighbors. This social intercourse was followed by intermarriages, but these were not numerous. Consequently the theory that every French-Canadian has a mixture of Indian blood must be discarded, because contrary to facts.

Some look upon the French Canadians as the coming race, because of their remarkable virility and the wonderful increase of their number during the past century. This opinion was expressed lately by the most important American newspaper of the New England States.

This estimate, however, cannot be looked upon as accurate. Though the French Canadian race is a vital one, and will likely continue to spread rapidly westward, it does not follow that it is in any sense the coming race. For it is acknowledged that the influence and the power of a nation do not depend solely nor chiefly upon its size. Other factors, both intellectual and moral, must also be taken into consideration in judging of the influence which a nation will be called upon to exercise.

There is yet another opinion concerning the French-Canadians, namely, that they are an inferior race.

In order to prove this, it is affirmed that they are poor, ignorant, superstitious and prejudiced.

To a casual observer it would certainly seem as though this view was correct, the more so that facts are at hand to substantiate it.

That the French-Canadian people are poor, ignorant, superstitious and prejudiced may be granted, and may be easily explained.

But there is a long way between granting this and arriving at the conclusion that the French-Canadian race is the inferior of any other race. If it be true that the French-Canadian is poor, it is not because he is lazy, intemperate or unskilful. On the contrary, he is known to be active, sober and industrious. As the result of these qualities he has accumulated wealth, not in his own cash-box, however, but in that of his lord and master, the parish priest.

A part of the poor man's savings and of the rich man's revenue has found its way to the safe of the *Fabrique*. Another part has been used to build