

practice of mutual forbearance towards each other of the different bodies among whom the supreme power is distributed. Still, the measure of constitutional freedom that had been generously bestowed had its legitimate effect on the French-Canadians. They learned to appeal to British precedents, and a love of British institutions began to take possession of their minds. Nothing demonstrates this more satisfactorily than the contrast between their inaction during 1775-6, and their united and hearty action during the war of 1812-15. That war, which may be regarded as an episode in the constitutional history we are sketching, teaches to all who are willing to be taught several important lessons. It showed that French-Canadians had not forgotten how to fight, and that according as they were trusted so would they fight. No better illustration can be given than Châteauguay, where Colonel de Salaberry with 300 Canadian militiamen and a few Highlanders victoriously drove back an army 7000 strong. The Canadians everywhere flew to arms, in a quarrel, too, with the bringing on of which they had nothing to do. The Governor sent the regular troops to the frontiers, and confided the guardianship of Quebec to the city militia, while men like Bedard who had been accused of "treason," because they understood the spirit of the Constitution better than their accusers, were appointed officers. Successive campaigns proved, not only that Canada was unconquerable—even against a people then forty times as numerous—because of the spirit of its people, its glorious winters, and northern fastnesses, but also because an unprovoked war upon Canada will never command the united support of the people of the States. When the war was declared in 1812, several of the New England States refused their quotas of militia. The Legislature of Maryland declared that they had acted constitutionally in refusing. And all over New England secession was seriously threatened. What happened then would occur again, under other forms, if an effort were made to conquer four or five millions of Canadians, in order to make them citizens of free States. Should either political party propose it, that party would seal its own ruin. A great Christian people will struggle unitedly and religiously to free millions, never to subdue millions. Should momentary madness drive them to attempt the commission of the crime, the consequence would more likely be the disruption of the Republic than the conquest of Canada.

So much the episode of 1812-15 teaches, read in the light of the present day. When the war was over, the struggles for constitutional development were resumed. Complicated in Lower Canada by misunderstandings of race, they broke out in "the troubles" or sputterings of rebellion of 1837-38. The forcible reunion of the two Canadas in 1840 was a temporary measure, necessitated probably by those troubles. It led to friction, irritations, a necessity for double majorities, and perpetual deadlocks. Did not Pitt in 1791 foresee these as the sure results in the long run of any such union, beautiful in its simplicity though it appears to doctrinaires? The confederation of British-America in 1867 put an end to the paralysis, by the adoption of the federal principle,