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"The French," wrote Isaac Weld, nearly a hundred years ago, in giving his experience of Montreal, "retain in a great measure the manners and customs of their ancestors, as well as the language; they have an unconquerable aversion to learn English, and it is very rare to meet with any person amongst them that can speak it in any manner; but the English inhabitants are, for the most part, well acquainted with the French language." When, fifty-five years later, Mr. Weld's half-brother visited Montreal, the elder traveller being still alive, a change had set in which tended in the course of time to reverse the verdict of the latter. Certainly, in the present day, it is the exception to meet a fairly educated French-Canadian in this city to whom English is not almost as his mother tongue, while among the professional and business classes of French society it is often spoken with a correctness that might put some Englishmen to the blush. On the other hand, though French is spoken by a certain proportion of the British population, its use is by no means so general as, according to Isaac Weld, it was in the closing years of the 18th century.

Even in this Province of Quebec, how many British Canadians are wont to address audiences in French with correctness, clearness, and fluency, as so many French-Canadian public men do in admirable English! There are, indeed, a few English lawyers and parliamentarians who, on occasion, can plead a case or make a hustings speech in tolerable French; but, as a rule, educated Englishmen, even in Lower Canada, lack the readiness and naturalness in the use of the French tongue which their French-Canadian fellow-citizens of the same class display in the use of English. The contrast is equally marked if we have regard to the facility with which either section of the population employs the language of the other for literary, commercial, or statistical purposes. Many French-Canadians write English with ease, whereas, though many Englishmen can read French, the proportion of them who can write it with accuracy and taste is extremely small.

Major Powell, director of the United States Geological Survey, had hardly published his warning—"The lesson of Conemaugh"—in the *North American Review*, when the Johnstown disaster was repeated, on a smaller scale, it is true, but still with deplorable results in the destruction of property. The Coatesville casualty, which spread desolation through a considerable portion of the Brandywine Valley, Pennsylvania, would have attracted more notice had not the tremendous calamity which preceded it dwindled its impor-

tance by contrast. The lesson—to whose opportuneness the bursting of the Hibernia dam adds significance and force—is twofold. On the one hand, Major Powell deprecates that inconsequence of weak humanitarianism which condemns the application of invention or skill to the needs of mankind because, in a single instance or a few instances, through some unhappy defect, such application has resulted disastrously. A railway accident or a shipwreck, a bridge sinking beneath exceptional strain, or a building that collapses through some oversight of construction, would, on that principle, justify the abandonment of steam locomotion or seafaring, of bridge transit, or even of habitation beneath a roof after the manner of civilized men. To cry out against the collection of water into reservoirs for domestic or manufacturing purposes because out of hundreds of such receptacles a half a dozen have been badly constructed, and are, therefore, dangerous, is surely most irrational. But it would be equally irrational and, as the responsibility rests with enlightened men, still more blameworthy, to allow such terribly taught lessons as that of Conemaugh to pass unheeded.

What, then, was at fault? And what is the remedy? The art of dam-construction is within the grasp of every intelligent engineer. It has been practised further back than written history takes us in retrospect. The Conemaugh dam was built, it seems, on the traditional and still prevalent model. Of the numerous dams on this continent the most are of earth; only a few of masonry. The Conemaugh dam belonged to the former class, of which it was a fair sample. What was amiss, then? "In the construction of the dam," says Major Powell, "there was a total neglect to consider the first and fundamental problem—the duty the dam was required to perform. The works were not properly related to the natural conditions, and so a lake was made at Conemaugh, which was for a long time a menace to the people below, and at last swept them to destruction." Two things were essentially necessary before the works were begun—a topographic survey and a hydrographic survey. "The precipitation in rain and snow over the basin must be determined as an average from year to year, and also the maximum precipitation at the time of the great flood. This must be supplemented by the gauging of streams to determine their average volumes and maximum volumes." Yet in American engineering these data, which can only be obtained after the surveys just indicated, have, in many cases, been strangely lost sight of, though their necessity has been emphasized again and again by dire disaster.

It is deplorable that such a heart-rending fatality as that which has plunged Quebec into the gloom of sorrow should be made the occasion for political agitation. If there is blame to be apportioned, let it fall on the blameworthy. But, in the presence of so many victims, so many mourners, it is surely in the worst taste to deliberately fabricate weapons of party warfare for the wounding of political foes. The situation is far too serious to be made a vantage ground from which to strike such unworthy blows. If resentment mingles with the grief of the survivors of the disaster, who have lost not only house and home, but much—in some cases all, or nearly all—that made home dear, we can understand the feelings to which it is due. But to turn the grief of such sufferers into a pretext for making political capital is as base as it is mis-

chievous. Without screening the culpable—if any can be deemed especially culpable for not foreseeing what all knew to be possible, yet none really apprehended—the duty of the present is to alleviate, as far as possible, the distress of the survivors, and to take prompt measures to prevent a recurrence of the catastrophe. It is to be hoped that the steps that are being adopted will serve both objects, and that the tragic landslide of the 19th ult will be the last casualty of the kind to bring desolation to Quebec.

Some of the "side shows" which have gradually become recognized features of the Toronto exhibition, have been somewhat severely criticized in the press as tending to the disappointment of visitors, and, therefore, calculated to prejudice them against the exhibition itself. It must be remembered, however, that there is a large class in every community that can only be attracted to what is instructive and morally improving by some enticement of an amusing character. An industrial exhibition, when (like that of Toronto) it has become a permanent institution, is an admirable school in which to acquire an amount and variety of useful knowledge that is accessible nowhere else. But, from time immemorial, it has been usual, in schemes for improving the people, to combine the useful with the agreeable. It is, of course, essential, to ensure success, that what is offered for delectation, as well as edification, should be the best of its kind, and the trouble is that where the entertainment comprises a multiplicity of features, some of them may be inferior in interest to what is provided in places where such features are specialties. Experience and the exercise of discrimination ought, in time, however, to rectify any defects of that kind.

"The ingenious Dr. Nooth," who seems to have been a man of note in his day, made experiments, nearly a hundred years ago, on maple sugar, which were not without interest. He granulated and refined it so as to render it equal, in the opinion of contemporary connoisseurs, to the best lump sugar made in England. It appears also, from the statement of Weld, that his example was followed by persons who expected to turn the refining of maple sugar to advantage. A maple sugar refinery was, we are told, established at Quebec; but, whether through lack of capital or defective methods, the undertaking did not succeed. "It ought not, however," says Weld, "to be concluded from this that a manufactory of the sort would not succeed if conducted by judicious persons that had ample funds for the business; on the contrary, it is highly probable that it would answer. There is great reason, also, to suppose that a manufactory for making the sugar from the beginning, as well as for refining it, might be established with advantage." Notwithstanding this recommendation, maple sugar, though thoroughly appreciated as a sweetmeat, has never made much figure in the markets of the new world. The bulk of the sugar known to commerce is divided between cane and beet sugar—the latter having somewhat the preponderance. The annual production of both kinds in recent years averages from 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 tons. Beet sugar is mainly manufactured in Germany, Austria-Hungary and France. Belgium, Holland and other countries also contribute to its production. Cane sugar has its sources of supply in the East and West Indies, South America, Mauritius, Egypt, Louisiana, etc. About a third of the yield comes from Spanish colonies. Beet sugar culture has been tried in Canada, but so far without much gain.