

sooner or later contribute to the democracy of letters and science works that can fairly take their place among the masterpieces which constitute the chief glory of England and France.

The literary history of Canada must resemble in many respects that of the United States. We find that in the early days of that country, when the people were laying the foundations of their government, very able writers devoted themselves to the study of political and constitutional questions. No greater literary monument is possessed by any country than that series of essays written by Hamilton, Madison and Jay, but principally by the former, on the federal constitution adopted in 1787 after considerable doubt and hesitation on the part of statesmen and people. For breadth of constitutional learning, vigour of style, and acuteness of reasoning, Hamilton's papers stand in the front rank of this class of literature. In their press, in their state papers, and in the debates of their legislatures for many years we find the most interesting evidence of the culture of the leading minds of the country. The necessities of the Union at that time forced the talent of the Republic into a groove of thought where it would be of the greatest public value, and attract the most attention. The same has happened in a measure in Canada. The political changes that have taken place in the course of a century have engaged the attention of the best minds, and have originated a large number of invaluable pamphlets, essays and works — in some cases of an elaborate character — which favourably compare with the ablest productions of a similar class in other countries. The statesmen and publicists of Canada have displayed a breadth of knowledge and an amount of acumen in reducing theory to practice which affords abundant evidence of their descent from the races most capable of governing large communities on liberal constitutional principles.

The political institutions of Canada are the results of the labours and struggles of her public men during the century which has nearly elapsed since a representative system was established in the provinces of British North America. Home Rule exists in the full significance of the phrase. If we begin at the village councils which lie at the basis of the political structure, we find that the people are represented in some shape or other, and able to exercise a direct influence on the administration of public affairs in every sphere of political action. It was not so, however, in the days of the French regime. Then there existed an autocratic illiberal system of government which effectually crushed every expression of public sentiment. No meetings for the discussion of the most