

proved fatal, and it is not unlikely that his precipitation may make shipwreck of his enterprise in Quebec.

The Church in Quebec is immensely rich, while the people are poor and the treasury is empty. Besides the tithe, which by a strange anomaly on this continent of religious equality she legally levies, and imposts for *fabrique*, she owns not a little of the most valuable land in the Province, and her wealth is constantly growing by investment, for she is active in the financial as well as in the spiritual field. The devotion of the people is guarded by their illiteracy. Ecclesiastical statistics, compiled under ecclesiastical influence, throw not much light on the subject. The journal of Arthur Buies, "*La Lanterne*", throws more. It gives a letter from a correspondent who, it says, has held high political employment and has lived in a rural district for forty years. This correspondent says that among men of from twenty to forty years of age you will not find one in twenty who can read, or one in fifty who can write. They will tell you that they went to school from seven to fourteen, but that they have forgotten all they learned. This "all"—what was it? We may judge, says the correspondent of "*La Lanterne*", from the fact that the teachers are for the most part young girls taken from the convents because they are too poor to pay their pupils' fees, and with a salary of from ten to twenty louis a year. Those who have passed any time among the *habitants* confirm this statement, and say that the mayor of a town is not always able to write. The school-books, of which a set is before us, appear to be highly ecclesiastical in spirit and in the economy of the knowledge which they are calculated to convey. No wonder that miracles in abundance are performed at the shrine of Ste. Anne de Beaupré, while they are performed nowhere else upon this northern continent. The antagonism between this civilization and that of British Canada is complete.

The French peasantry of Quebec, if they have little to live on, can live on

little; their Church sedulously preaches early marriage, their women are good mothers, and they multiply apace. Before their increasing number and pressure the British are rapidly disappearing from the Province. In the city of Quebec there are now only about six thousand left. In the eastern townships, once their almost exclusive domain, their numbers are rapidly dwindling, and the Protestant churches are left without worshippers. The Church advances money to the Frenchman to buy the Englishman's farm, which in French hands will become subject to tithe and *fabrique*. The commerce of Montreal is still in Protestant hands, but a Legislature of French Catholics has found its way, by taxing banks and other financial corporations, to the strong-box, just as a Legislature of Celtic Catholics in Ireland would find its way to the strong-box of the Scotch Protestants of Belfast. As matters are now going, the future of the commercial community of Montreal is not free from clouds. If that community has hitherto thought of little but its trade, it will find that without paying attention to questions of public principle trade itself cannot be safe.

The weak point in the case of the opponents of the Jesuits' Estates Act is that two years ago an Act incorporating the Jesuits was allowed to slip through without protest. The explanation is that the Protestant minority in Quebec is so weak and so thoroughly overborne, that it has been sinking into a state of torpid resignation, while the *British Province* usually takes little notice of anything that is going on in Quebec. The Jesuits' Estates Act seems, however, at last to have aroused the Protestants of Quebec as well as the people of Ontario. Not that it would make any difference with regard to the question of principle if all the Protestants of Quebec, deserting the cause of their own rights and interests, had acquiesced in the Jesuits' Estates Act. The right and duty of the people of the Dominion generally to put a veto on the endowment of

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