

them into their new homes, the love of constitutional government and a steadfast attachment to English law. When the Quebec Act was passed, the English-speaking population of the country was a mere handful; men who, for the most part, had been attracted thither by the bait of trade, and who looked forward with feverish anxiety to the day when, having made a fortune, they would forever quit the shores of the St. Lawrence and return again in affluence and wealth to the little Island across the ocean, which they never had ceased to think of and speak of as their home. These men, although seven-eighths of the trade of the colony was in their hands, and their interests must necessarily have often been very much jeopardized by the inconveniences and uncertainty which must perforce accompany an unfixd and ever-changing system of jurisprudence, could scarcely expect to exercise as much influence on the home government as permanent settlers. In 1791 the case was widely different. That portion of the country which, in that ill-advised measure, is called Upper Canada, was being fast peopled with a race of men who had nobly sacrificed their dearest interests to their loyalty to their king; who, driven by rebellion from their own homes, had been forced by the adverse fate of war to seek refuge in His Majesty's closest domain, and had done so under an express promise that there they would find the protection of English laws and the comfort of constitutional institutions, to which they ever had been accustomed. Under the circumstances it is evident no ministry could have ventured to break faith with men so placed, and having first induced them to settle in Canada, it became necessary to provide them with a proper constitution.

There are plenty of flaws to be found in the "Constitutional Act," even as carried out, and some of the most objectionable features, such as a heredi-

tary Upper House, were never enforced. But with all its faults, the constitution was nevertheless found to work fairly well in Upper Canada. In Lower Canada less than fifty years of what to the French-Canadians was unheard-of freedom, led to rebellion, and it at last became necessary to pass the Union Act, in order to control the dissatisfied French-Canadians of Lower Canada by uniting them to the loyal British subjects of Upper Canada. It would almost seem that even in their descendants, after a century of liberty, the French are incapable of moulding themselves to the proper working of free institutions. Liberty seems always doomed in their hands to degenerate into license. In Lower Canada the Constitutional Act led to rebellion, the Union to a galling domination of a compact French minority over a more divided English majority, Confederation to the establishment in the Province of Quebec of an openly proclaimed priestly rule, having for its object the down-treading and abolishing of everything British and everything Protestant. Legislative union when it does come, as come it must before long, will probably render harmless the efforts of these enthusiastic French-Canadians to harm in the future their fellow-countrymen of different creed and different origin, but can hardly be expected to change their natures and prevent them from continuing to be what they hitherto have been, dissatisfied, discontented and hostile, all of them aliens in feeling, many traitors at heart, adding to the bitterness of national prejudice the rancor of an aggressive and persecuting faith.

In summing up the history of Canada previous to 1791, Mr. Garneau says:—

"During twenty-six years, Canada had been subjected to three several systems of government; all which, though differing in name, perfectly resembled each other in tyranny and the disorders they gave rise to."