

Land. Though more democratic in their ideas of government than their fellow-subjects in the old land, and though free from many of the civil and religious disabilities so oppressive then, and in some respects oppressive still, they were quite contented with their colonial relationship to the Mother Country, and might have continued so, no one can tell how long, had their rights of self-government been respected. They were British by origin, by education and by sentiment, and there was no good reason for any change in their colonial status. The people who occupied Canada on the north had nothing in common with these southern colonists. Their laws, language and religion were different, and if they were to become British subjects in effect as well as in name, they had to be reconciled to new conditions of civil polity and to a government which they naturally disliked and distrusted. To hold them in subjection by force of arms, though sheltered by the ramparts of Quebec, was not considered the best way of securing their confidence, and accordingly with a liberality strangely in contrast with the treatment accorded their subjects in the thirteen colonies, the British Government adopted a policy of conciliation towards the French-Canadians, the effect of which will be more clearly seen at a later stage of my narrative. The most striking features of that policy were:

- (1) The free exercise of the Roman Catholic religion.
- (2) The right to exact tithes of their own people for the support of the Roman Catholic Church.
- (3) Exemption from the Supremacy Act of Queen Elizabeth, by which Roman Catholics in Great Britain were excluded from office.
- (4) The continuation of French laws as to property and civil rights.
- (5.) The continuation of the feudal system, which to the French Seigniors of the day was a matter of great moment.
- (6) The promise of a Council, composed of such men as the Governor-General might appoint, for purposes of local administration.

Such a policy, so conciliatory in its spirit, went a great way, as might naturally be expected, to reconcile the subjects of New France to the sovereignty of Great Britain. Anyone, therefore, who could look over the North American Continent in 1763, the date of the Treaty of Paris, might say that the prospects of a British colonial empire of colossal proportions were as bright as the most vivid imagination could desire. With the exception of Louisiana, Florida and the Spanish and Russian possessions on