

issued, two of the objects of the insurrection were stated to be the abolition of feudal tenures and the establishment of Registry Offices.* When I observe these inconsistencies of conduct among the opponents and supporters of these reforms; when I consider that their attainment was prevented by means of the *censitaires*, the very persons most interested in their success, and that they were not more eagerly demanded by the wealthier of the English, than by the artisans and labourers of that race whose individual interests would hardly have derived much direct benefit from their success, I cannot but think that many, both of the supporters and of the opponents, cared less for the measures themselves, than for the handle which the agitation of them gave to their national hostility; that the Assembly resisted these changes chiefly because the English desired them; and that the eagerness with which many of the English urged them was stimulated by finding them opposed by the French.

Nor did I find the spirit which animated each party at all more coincident with the representations current in this country, than their objects appeared, when tried by English, or rather European ideas of reforming legislation. An utterly uneducated and singularly inert population, implicitly obeying leaders who ruled them by the influence of a blind confidence and narrow national prejudices, accorded very little with the resemblance which had been discovered to that high-spirited democracy which effected the American Revolution. Still less could I discover in the English population those slavish tools of a narrow official clique, or a few purse-proud merchants, which their opponents had described them as being. I have found the main body of the English population, consisting of hardy farmers and humble mechanics, composing a very independent, not very manageable, and, sometimes a rather turbulent, democracy. Though constantly professing a somewhat extravagant loyalty and high prerogative doctrines, I found them very determined on maintaining in their own persons a great respect for popular rights, and singularly ready to enforce their wishes by the strongest means of constitutional pressure on the Government. Between them and the Canadians I found the strongest hostility; and that hostility was, as might be expected, most strongly developed among the humblest and rudest of the body. Between them and the small knot of officials, whose influence has been represented as so formidable, I found no sympathy whatever; and it must be said, in justice to this body of officials, who have been so much assailed as the enemies of the Canadian people, that however little I can excuse the injurious influence of that system of administration, which they were called upon to carry into execution, the members of the oldest and most powerful official families were, of all the English in the country, those in whom I generally found most sympathy with, and kindly feeling towards, the French population. I could not therefore believe that this animosity was only that subsisting between an official oligarchy and a people; and again, I was brought to a conviction that the contest, which had been represented as a contest of classes, was, in fact, a contest of races.

Independent spirit
of the English
population.

However unwilling we may be to attribute the disorders of a country connected with us to a cause so fatal to its tranquillity, and one which it seems so difficult to remove, no very long or laboured consideration of the relative characters and position of these races is needed for convincing us of their invincible hostility towards each other. It is scarcely possible to conceive descendants of any of the great European nations more unlike each other in character and temperament, more totally separated from each other by language, laws, and modes of life, or placed in circumstances more calculated to produce mutual misunderstanding, jealousy and hatred. To conceive the incompatibility of the two races in Canada, it is not enough that we should picture to ourselves a community composed of equal proportions of French and English. We must bear in mind what kind of

Dissimilarity of the
races.

French

* Among the few petitions, except those of mere compliment, which I received from French Canadians, were three or four for the abolition and commutation of the feudal tenures. But the most remarkable was one which was presented from the inhabitants of the county of Saguenay, and supported by Mr. Charles Drolet, late M.P.P. for that county. The petitioners, who represented themselves as suffering under a degree of distress of which the existence is too deplorably certain, prayed to be allowed to settle on the wild lands at the head of the Saguenay. They expressed their willingness to take the lands on any conditions which the Government might propose, but they prayed that it should not be granted on the feudal tenure.