

Suppose we declare that Canadian Constitutional History begins properly in 1840. Can we understand from that even its present working? For instance, can we understand the relation of Quebec to the other provinces without some knowledge of the position therein of the Catholic Church; and can that be understood without reverting the circumstances of its establishment? Any such limitation of view is impossible for our purpose, and for us Constitutional History cannot be less than the whole political and social development of a people looked at in its relation to political organization.

Canadian Constitutional History, interesting as it is to all scientific students of politics of whatever country, demands especially the attention of those who care for Canada's future. Canada is not likely very long to remain exactly in its present position, but what is to become of it will very largely be determined by the working of its present Constitution. The existing Canadian Constitution may be roughly described as a combination of the political principles and machinery of England and the United States. Not that all in which Canada resembles England was borrowed consciously from England,—much of it was the natural growth in Canada of the same forces as produced in England the same results: nor that all in which Canada resembles the United States was consciously drawn from the United States,—much of it is the necessary outcome of Confederation. The Constitution of the United States was indeed, in its origin, as nearly a copy of the British Constitution of a hundred years ago as American statesmen could make under the circumstances. By this fact is to be explained the power of the President, and the separation and, to a large extent, independence one from another of the Executive and Legislature.* But during the next fifty years the Cabinet system was restored in England, after the interruption caused by the action of

* See Maine, *Popular Government*, Essay IV.