

enter into what must have seemed to many a hopeless struggle with England. The fall of Quebec may be considered the first step in the direction of the independence of the old English colonies.

When the war of independence was over, Canada was only a sparsely settled country, in which the French Canadians were very largely in the majority. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island there was a small English population, chiefly composed of United Empire Loyalists.\* A considerable number of the same class came over from the United States and settled in the Eastern Townships of French or Lower Canada, and in the province of Upper or Western Canada. During the war of independence the French Canadians resisted all attempts that were made to induce them to unite their fortunes with the revolted colonies. The British Government and Parliament had seen the necessity of conciliating the conquered people, and had passed, in 1774, what is known as the Quebec Act,† which gave additional guarantees to that nationality for the security of their property, and the preservation of their language, religion, and institutions. Owing in a great measure to this conciliatory policy, and to the efforts of the priests, who have always been firm friends of British rule, the French people of Lower Canada remained faithful to the King of England, and the history of those times records the death of the brave Montgomery and the defeat of his troops, deluded by the belief that Canada would be an easy conquest as soon as the invaders set foot within its limits.‡

With the settlement of Upper Canada by the Loyalists and the English population that subsequently flowed into the country, it was thought advisable to establish two provinces, in which the French and English elements would be kept separate and distinct.§ With the light that experience has given us in these later times it was a great mistake in the opinion of many statesmen to have isolated the races, and by hedging in the French at the very commencement of their history, to have prevented the gradual absorption of all nationalities into one great English-speaking people. Parliament formed a legislature for each province, and wished the people of Canada God-speed in the new experiment of government on which they were entering. No doubt can exist as to the sincerity and good

\* In 1784 there were in Upper Canada 10,000 U. E. Loyalists; in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, 20,000. In 1790, the population of Canada was 161,311, of whom 120,000 were French. —Census of Canada, 1871.

† Imperial Statute, 14 Geo. III., c. 83.

‡ Montgomery made his attack on Quebec on the night of the 30th December, 1775. Garneau, iii. 5.

§ Constitutional Act, 1791, or 31 Geo. III., c. 31.