

the system works admirably. "There is no more bulldozing," he avers, "by our manufacturers; they cannot march their men to the polls under a foreman and vote them all for one ticket. It does away with everything that makes politics disreputable." The last statement is, it may be feared, rather strong, and likely to be modified by experience, unless Massachusetts has improved a good deal upon the Canadian system. At the same time we have no doubt that the contrast between an election under this system and one of the kind with which citizens of the United States are most familiar, must have been so marked and pleasing as to warrant much hopeful enthusiasm. There seems good reason to believe that our neighbours have entered in genuine earnest upon the work of political purification—not, it is too true, before it was sorely needed. The uprising of the "Mugwumps" five years ago; the steady, though slow progress of civil service reform, and now the adoption of ballot reform by one State after another, these and various other indications point to the conclusion that the worst days of political corruption are past, and that the better classes are making and will make their influence felt in public affairs as never before. The struggle may be prolonged, but the history of England, as well as the improved tone and tendencies in the Great Republic, warrant the anticipation that having fairly entered on the upward course, the forces that make for national morality will gain momentum with every fresh achievement, and raise the nation in a few years to a higher plane than it has yet occupied. The best interests of Canada are so affected by reason of proximity that all good Canadians have selfish as well as philanthropic motives for wishing success to whatever tends to elevate the national character of her powerful neighbour.

WHETHER any real progress is being made in the United States towards the solution of its "Negro Problem" is a question upon which it is difficult to form an opinion. The problem itself involves conditions of terrible complexity. It is to-day by far the most serious question in American politics. To a certain extent the present troubles were inevitable from the moment the conclusion of the civil war left in the South several millions of freedmen, in a state of childish ignorance and incapacity, to be in some way cared for and trained up to the intelligence and self-reliance necessary to fit them to take care of themselves as citizens of the Republic. What real progress they have made during the quarter-century which has since elapsed it is difficult to determine, but the fact remains that to-day there are 8,000,000 of coloured people in the Southern States, in a condition of "discontented political and social inferiority." The *Nation*, whose phrase we have borrowed in part, says, "of discontented, and, as far as human eye can see, of permanent political and social inferiority." That is, however, the Democratic, and so the Southern and pessimistic, view of the case. There are just now before the American public three distinct schemes for the radical treatment of the difficulty. One is embodied in the Bill now before the Senate for Government aid to "persons of colour" in emigrating from the Southern States to Africa. This might help matters if the great majority of the "persons of colour" were willing to go to Africa, and if it were possible to provide means of transportation for such a host. But any partial movement of the kind, which would suffice simply to drain off the most energetic and enterprising part of the coloured population, would but intensify the evils and make the last state of the mass remaining behind worse than the first. Both the other plans, viz., that which proposes to educate the negro at the national expense, and that which proposes to take his political rights under the national protection, have, in addition to other difficulties, the fundamental objection that they are inconsistent with the local autonomy which is reserved to the States by the Constitution, and which is in the nature of things the corner-stone of every federal system of government. These objections may not be insuperable. It is possible that from a moral point of view they ought not to prevail. The negro was long kept in the state of servitude of which his present helplessness and degradation are the result, by national legislation and sanction. The nation interfered with State rights in order to effect his liberation. It may be that it is equally bound in righteousness to interfere further with those rights in order to give him that intellectual, moral and political education, without which the gift of liberty may be a curse rather than a blessing. But, passing by all other objections, it is at least doubtful whether the real end aimed at—the

permanent elevation of the negro—could be attained by any such means. Both proposals have the fatal defect of seeking to protect and elevate the negro by external agencies, instead of developing his own powers of self-help, upon which he must in the end rely. It is quite possible that the experience through which he is now passing, stern and often cruel as it is, may be just what is necessary, in the order of nature, to bring out whatever latent force and manliness there may be in the race, and to compel them to do for themselves what no power outside of themselves can possibly do for them. A very hopeful indication that some progress is being made is afforded in one fact, cited by Gen. S. C. Armstrong in *Frank Leslie's Magazine*, that "the race is steadily accumulating property in land," and that "where the total taxable landed property of Georgia has increased in ten years 53 per cent., the taxable landed property of the negro has increased 83 per cent.—a state of things" adds Gen. Armstrong, "whose significance needs no comment, especially as it exists, according to the best evidence we can get, throughout the South."

### THE ENGLISH MINORITY IN QUEBEC. III.

#### THE ERECTION OF PARISHES.

IN reading many of the articles written upon the parish system in this province one might be led to suppose that the Roman Bishops possess an arbitrary power of erecting, dividing, or uniting parishes of their own mere motion; and, also, of building churches, and presbyteries at the expense of their people wherever and however they please. Such is not the case. The tithes and dues are collectable by law; but assessments for other ecclesiastical purposes cannot be levied without the consent of the people and the laity have more to say about it than is usually supposed by Protestants. The whole procedure is regulated by statute and guarded by numerous formalities, the neglect of any one of which is fatal. Familiar though these may be to Roman Catholics, it will be worth while for Protestants to know a little about the organization of the Church of Rome considered entirely apart from its doctrine.

All proceedings under the parish system originate with the laity; whether for the erection of a parish or for its subdivision or union with another. A majority of the Roman Catholic free-holders of adult age and resident in the territory sign a request which, with a map in detail, is sent to the Bishop of the diocese. Upon receipt of this the Bishop gives notice of the day and hour when he, or his deputy, will visit the locality to inquire into the facts. This notice is read at High Mass on two successive Sundays and posted at the church door, or if there is no church at some well-known public place, such as the mill or school-house. Ten days at least after the second notice the Bishop's deputy arrives and holds a public meeting, a complete certified list of all the free-holders is provided him, together with certificates that the notices have been duly given. He is thus in a position to know that the majority really desire the change. If any oppose it they state their reasons. He then draws up a report in detail, including the objections made, and forwards it with all the papers to the Bishop. If the Bishop consents he issues a decree to that effect and the locality as described becomes an ecclesiastical or, as it is called, a canonical parish. All the Roman Catholics must pay their tithes, and dues for baptisms, marriages and such like services to the curé who is appointed to the charge. The unit of the organization of the Roman church is then complete.

So far the matter is purely ecclesiastical. The State has not intervened. But in Lower Canada the Lieut.-Governor, under legislation passed first in 1831, acting with the advice of his ministers, appoints for each diocese a Board of Commissioners, generally five—and all laymen. If the canonical parish is to be recognized by the State a formal request must be drafted to them, signed either by ten at least of the signers of the petition to the Bishop, or by a majority of the whole parish. The canonical decree must then be read in church on two consecutive Sundays and notice given that, thirty days after the second reading, application will be made to the commissioners for civil recognition. All persons having objections are notified to send them to the secretary of the commission. The request is then forwarded together with a detailed map, a copy of the Bishop's decree and certificates of the legal notices. The oppositions, if there are any, are also sent in. The commissioners consider these documents and when necessary the parties are heard; or they go themselves to the locality. When they arrive at a decision they draw up a report, stating the objections made, if any, and the reasons of their judgment. This they send to the Lieut.-Governor, and he, with the advice of his council—all laymen—issues, or refuses to issue, his proclamation. If the proclamation is issued it is published in the official Gazette. The parish thenceforth is known as a *civil* parish. It may build or rebuild or repair the church and presbytery; and it may lay out a cemetery. For these and such like purposes it may tax or pledge the property of the Roman Catholics of the parish.

But that may not be done in a hasty or arbitrary manner. The French-Canadian is a very legal personage. He loves forms and ceremonies and will get obstinate if he is hurried.

A request is drawn up stating what is required to be done in the fullest detail and the reasons therefor. This must be signed by a majority of the adult freeholders as before, and sent to the Bishop. Notice having been given, in due time the Bishop's deputy arrives on the spot. He inquires as to the state of the buildings, with the advice of an expert if necessary. He finds out if the majority really require the work proposed—whether the church is really too small,—whether it might not be repaired instead of being rebuilt, and into the finances of the parish. He listens to all objections and makes a full report to the Bishop, who either refuses the request or issues his decree. If permission is given to go on, a similar request is then made to the Commissioners for permission to elect trustees. This request also must be signed by a majority of those interested and a plan of the proposed work with a copy of the Bishop's permission must be attached. The Commissioners having consented, a public meeting is held, after full notice as in the other cases, and three trustees are elected. The trustees must apply to the Commissioners to be confirmed. At the same time they must state what amount they require to raise for the purpose specified and ask permission to levy an assessment, whereupon the Commissioners appoint a day to hear all parties interested and give notice as before to that effect. If the trustees are confirmed, they prepare detailed plans and specifications and a schedule containing the names of the parties assessed and the amount for each. This is left for a stated period on view in the presbytery and notice is given that the trustees will, on a certain day, apply to the Commissioners to have the assessment roll confirmed. All parties having objections are notified to file them before that date. The papers, with certificates of compliance with all legal forms, are considered by the Commissioners who hear all the parties interested and reject, modify, or confirm the assessment roll as may appear best in their judgment. If all this tedious detail has been given, it is to show that Protestants are in error when they suppose that the clergy impose these assessments. On the contrary it is the laity who tax themselves. No doubt the clergy use their influence as they would anywhere; but they cannot in any way drag into such matters their functions as dispensers of the sacraments, and the most cursory glance at the Law Reports will show that the French-Canadian is not nearly so tractable as is supposed. Such a tedious procedure as has here been described would be intolerable to an English congregation; but, on the other hand, how often do English congregations overbuild! How often do they weaken their respective religious organizations by rivalry! That at least is avoided. Every dollar of assessment tells, and therefore it is that the country churches seem good out of proportion to the houses of the people and that they are all at a rational distance apart. The assessment roll, once homologated by the Commissioners, becomes a first charge upon all the real property of Roman Catholics in the parish and, whether registered or not, these assessments will take precedence of all mortgages. Protestants who advance money on real estate are sometimes ignorant of this and when they foreclose they are indignant at finding that the Church must be paid first. This is the nearest thing to a real grievance for Protestants in the whole parish system. It is the only way in which they can be said to contribute to the Roman Church and they must bear it in mind when they lend money on the real estate of Roman Catholics. If a Roman Catholic finds these tithes and dues and assessments onerous he has only to turn Protestant and he will escape them all in the future. There is the most perfect freedom to do that. In a case decided in the Superior Court, a man who had even signed the petition for the construction of the Church at Lachine, escaped his assessment upon his declaration that he had turned Protestant. Such cases do not often happen, but one is enough to illustrate the reality of religious liberty in this province where the Protestant minority is the object of so much outside sympathy.

So far then we have two distinct things—the *canonical* parish which the Bishop, at the request of his people, erects precisely as the Methodist Conference for its people might mark out a circuit: and the *civil* parish erected by the State, again at the request of the people, for purposes of self-taxation. For all purposes of these parishes the Protestant is non-existent. The civil parish may, however, take on another phase; it may under certain restrictions become a municipality. In this case it may elect a common council and have a mayor who will have a seat in the county council. It will, in short, become an ordinary municipal corporation, with municipal powers of raising money for roads, bridges, ferries and similar works and of making by-laws for licenses and police regulations. Then the English Protestant appears in the parish. He has a vote like every body else, he uses the roads like every body else, he may sit upon the council like every body else—if he gets votes enough. Under the Municipal Code this province is politically organized into town, village, or rural municipalities—the institutions are at bottom the same. The mayors of the rural municipalities are organized into county councils under a county warden. In the Eastern Townships, where the English settled, the municipalities were formed out of Townships—in the French part of the province they were formed out of parishes. It is the same thing, municipally, under two names, that is—a definite area was marked out under the name *parish* in one part of the province and under the name *township* in another. A parish municipality is however *quoad* its Roman Catholic citizens something more than a mere municipality. It has to them an ecclesias-