

a Plato, an Aristotle, a Dante, Shakespeare or Newton, only make more obvious the incompatibility of such manifestations with any evolutionary theory. Geology may reveal the onward march through countless ages, refashioning continents, and advancing in orderly progression from the lowest to ever higher organisms. One common plan of structure may be traced throughout geological time amid all the manifold diversities of vertebrate life, even as one law is found to pervade and control the whole visible universe; but—

Though worlds on worlds in myriads roll  
Around us, each with differing powers  
And other forms of life than ours:  
What know we greater than the soul?

Life is as great a mystery as ever; and that which humanity comprehends as its immortal essence can have no relation to any progressive development of mere physical structure. The mind is the standard of humanity. Man alone, savage and civilized alike, looks before and after. Nature and experience alike confirm the radical distinction between him and the irrational creation. Psychology can only know the physical as subjective. Nevertheless in that faculty of reason, the distinctive essential of man, whereby he is able not only to look forth on the visible heavens and realize in some faint degree the cosmos, but to apprehend its lesson of humility, we read the brightest of all the illumined pages of the book of nature and find no flaw. The very fact that "this brave overhanging firmament; this majestic roof, fretted with golden fire," expanded before our nightly vision, seems, to us, infinite in its compass, is in itself the index of an apprehension that enthrones reason apart from the highest attributes of irrational life. The physicist and the metaphysician have diverse conceptions of space; but practically, for us, the impossible is to conceive of limits to the universe. Imagination speeds from star to star through all the fields of space, guided by the strictest mathematical induction; and finds everywhere the same majestic harmony. No chaos lies behind the heavens nightly revealed anew in all their mystery as evening draws her azure curtain athwart the sun. It is indeed the garish day, with its mundane round of petty cares, that curbs the wings of fancy, blinds the eye of faith, and shuts out heaven from our view. But who can set bounds to that mighty vision? If we sphere space, what lies beyond it? Still law, order, harmony—one over-ruling, all-prevailing influence—one divine purpose. What can be behind it but God?

One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off, divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

#### THE ENGLISH MINORITY IN QUEBEC.—I.

THE English Protestant minority in the Province of Quebec ought to be very unhappy, if for no other reason, because so many estimable people in the sister Provinces and in the United States seem to be distressed on their account. It is not pleasant to be the object of so much solicitude. Besides, it is too late. The doctrine of "States' rights" has been so persistently maintained by the other Provinces, especially by New Brunswick and Ontario, that it is impossible to deny to the French in Quebec those powers which the English majorities in the other Provinces have successfully asserted. It was probably too much to expect that any consideration for the English Protestants of Quebec would prevent the adoption of extreme States' rights opinions. The marked ability of the Provincial advocates has extorted from the Confederation Act meanings which the report of the debates shows to have been remote from the minds of its framers. The set of opinion is all in the direction of Provincial autonomy, and no change in the opposite direction is in the least probable. What assistance then the other Provinces can afford to the minority of Quebec does not clearly appear, even if that minority shared generally in the gloomy apprehensions felt elsewhere on their account.

The English minority ought also to be unhappy because of the civil and religious disadvantages which it would appear from outside sources that they are obliged to endure. And, then, if perchance any one of the minority faintly suggests that he cannot perceive anything unusually hard in his lot—anything beyond what falls to minorities elsewhere—he is chidden by "superior persons" for not realizing his abject condition. So that he becomes discouraged because he is not unhappy enough to please his neighbours.

For after all, in real deed, the most of us who have long resided in this Province do not find it in the least disagreeable. Unless the Anglo-Saxon mind is at an early age familiarized with other races and religions, it is apt to form fixed ideas. And so it often happens that the French Roman Catholic, as imagined by our outside friends, is different from the person we come in daily contact with. An Englishman may dwell a life-time in peace in the heart of French Canada. Nobody will leave tracts at his door or give them to his children. He may be on excellent terms, and even exchange hospitalities, with the *curé*; but if that reverend gentleman should feel any doubts about his host's future state, he will never be disagreeable enough to express them. In Montreal there is the most absolute freedom of discussion for Protestants. We may say, if we wish, just as unpleasant things here of those who differ from us, as in Toronto—which is saying a great deal. And, indeed, this tolerant feeling in Montreal elicited comment at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance which was held here last year. In opening the debate upon

"Romish dogma a source of religious, social and national peril," one of the Toronto clergymen remarked, that there had "been no occasion where a discussion on Romanism had been carried on so fully, so closely, so delightfully. We are sitting here to-day," he added, "under the shade of our own vine and fig-tree, none daring to make us afraid." Now this is very good evidence in favour of Montreal.

Beyond question the Roman Church has an advantage over all others in this Province, inasmuch as it may collect its tithes and dues under an Imperial Statute. But before blaming too severely the British Government for that, we should remember the whole scope of the Act and its date. No one dreamed of dis-establishment then. The intention was to establish and endow, first the Church of England and then the Church of Scotland as Protestant Churches, and, in a lesser degree, the Roman Church for the French population. The first part of the plan was not possible upon this continent at that period. The Protestants united to frustrate it. They broke down the Establishments and destroyed the endowments intended for themselves. Whether they were right or wrong is not in dispute. The fact is, that they did it while the French stood aside, seeing that the quarrel was none of theirs. But the Roman Catholics would not break up their own *quasi* establishment, and, therefore, it remains to this day. When they choose to do so, they may. They have the votes to do it. Before that time arrives, it will not—it cannot be done. The English Provinces have established "States' rights." Shall they not be equally available to the French majority in this Province? The Protestants are as one to six. Public agitation in Ontario or the United States cannot help that; nor can discussions upon "Romish dogma," no matter how delightfully thorough. They only attach the people more fully to the principles attacked, not always with judgment or moderation. A Doctor of Divinity came on from New York to tell us, in Montreal, that the Jesuit Order has been dissolved by Popes "again and again," that "the present Pope, Leo XIII., has again restored them (the Jesuits) to power," and that "Romanism at the present moment of human history means Jesuitism." What can be the depth of the well of knowledge from which such propositions are drawn? They cannot help us here. What effect the present agitation may have elsewhere, it is difficult to calculate. The Roman Church exists over the whole world under infinitely varied conditions. The advantage it has derived from the method of the late settlement of the so-called Jesuits' Estates in Canada is very problematical. The agitation it has caused has been very wide-spread and may have had greater effects than appear at first sight. In Brazil, for instance, and in South and Central America generally, the Roman Church may lose more than it has gained here. The Jesuits are reported to own immense estates in Brazil. The revindication of these estates here after one hundred years may cause them to be distributed and secularized there. All these considerations, however, concern the authorities of the Roman Church at Rome more than the Protestant minority in Quebec.

Returning, however, to the *quasi* establishment of the Roman Church in Quebec, one may ask—Does it in any way affect the English minority? Certainly not; for the very same Statute of 1774—an Imperial Statute beyond repeal even at Ottawa—protects them. And in the Revised Statutes of Quebec, just published, section 3410, in the chapter on religion, reads as follows: "Nothing in this chapter shall render any of Her Majesty's subjects of any class of Protestants whatever, or any person whomsoever other than Her Majesty's subjects professing the Roman Catholic religion, liable to be assessed or taxed in any manner for the purposes of this chapter."

The Protestants are thus exempt; but it is argued that the French-Canadians are impoverished by these laws. That is clearly their own business. When they are inconvenienced they will complain. Can they be expected to believe that the present agitation in any degree arises from anxiety on the part of the English to save money for them? If the Church presses too hard upon them, and if the regular Orders from abroad, irresponsible save to alien generals, crowd into the Province and absorb too much land in mortmain, the people have the remedy in the ballot-box. There is no need of revolution. The bishops probably know that well enough. The strength of the Roman Church now is in its diocesan bishops, who are in touch with the people. The usefulness of the great regular Orders is gone. Their independence, privileges and exemptions are so many centres of disturbance.

The establishment of the Roman Church in Quebec depends chiefly upon the continuation of the parish system of the old French Monarchy. So much misunderstanding exists on this subject even here that it will be worth while to examine it somewhat closely, and enquire if it in any way presses upon the Protestant minority. Not one in a thousand Protestants knows the parish he lives in; and yet the city of Montreal is cut up into parishes, and has, of late, been divided and sub-divided in ways of which the English residents are only dimly conscious. I propose to try and explain this system in another letter, but it seemed proper first to reassure our friends elsewhere. Their apprehensions have been aroused by quotations from the writings of a lot of extremists who by no manner of means represent the mass of French opinion. It is not fair, for instance, to quote from the "Source du Mal" without explaining at the same time that the book was more offensive to Roman Catholics than to Protestants; and that it was condemned by the Archbishop and suppressed. Such quotations will not make evidence. Anyone who really wishes to know the relations of the Church to the

State ought to look up the decisions of the judges in the numerous cases which have been decided under the Parish law. All the minority have to watch for is absolute liberty of religious belief and worship. This is embodied in section 3439 of the Revised Statutes of Quebec as follows:—

"The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship without discrimination or preference, so the same be not made an excuse for acts of licentiousness or a justification of practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of the Province, are by the constitution and laws of this Province allowed to all Her Majesty's subjects within the same."

This is all which it is safe to ask. In these days of reading and writing and of newspapers the truth must surely prevail. The Revised Statutes of Quebec are law here, not the Syllabus of Errors. How far this latter is held to be binding on the interior conscience everywhere, or how far it is held to be applicable only to the countries specified in the document itself, it is impossible for us to know; and, until some overt action is taken, unnecessary to inquire. It is a matter of purely speculative interest. There must be freedom of thought for Roman Catholics also, and extremists of all creeds must, under modern systems, be allowed to indulge in the most uncharitable opinions of each other so long as such opinions do not take shape in overt acts. S. E. DAWSON.

Montreal, January 6th, 1890.

#### CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF JOHN HOWARD.

IN some departments of mission work it might be a difficult and invidious task to have to say who were its pioneers, but in the corporal work of mercy of visiting prisoners and captives with a view to the amelioration of their condition, the name of John Howard stands out clearly in modern times as the originator of a movement which has simply wrought a transformation in the condition of our gaols and prison-system. It was as a Christian, and not merely as a philanthropist that his life's work was undertaken. The Church had not been wanting in early days towards "prisoners and captives." The words "I was in prison and ye came unto me" had their effect in numberless cases in the ransom of captives and in the mitigation of the punishments of felons. St. Agnatus and the Apostolical Constitutions include the liberation of prisoners among the works of mercy. The influence of Christianity was so potent that an Imperial decree was issued in A.D. 400, which recognized the visitation of prisoners as an episcopal duty, with the view of preventing false imprisonment or any cruel treatment of those who were incarcerated. Later on, in A.D. 549, at the Synod of Orleans, it was laid down as part of the Archdeacon's duty to visit gaols every Sunday, to see to the needs of prisoners, and to provide them, if necessary, with food. It is said of St. Vincent de Paul that he "anticipated the prison reformers of the next century." Criminal law had but one idea, that of the punishment of the offender. St. Vincent added to this, the grand idea of the reformation of the culprit. He became, as is well-known, chaplain-general of galley-slaves and convicts. And the story of how St. Vincent having discovered in the galleys at Marseilles a young man who was suffering the penalty of a crime which he had never committed, and who was agonized by the thought of his destitute and disgraced wife and children, persuaded the jailor to allow him to become the convict's substitute, and how St. Vincent clothed himself in the prison garments and endured the remainder of his period of captivity, is one which is not only an evidence of the saint's heroic self-sacrifice, but also explains how St. Vincent gained an experience of and acquaintance with the sufferings of those condemned to the galleys.

John Howard, "the philanthropist," was born at Hackney, London, in 1726, and died January 20, 1790, at Kherson, in the South of Russia, from having caught infection from a fever patient for whom he had prescribed. In that country special preparations have been made for duly observing and honouring his centenary, while the Russian Government has offered a gold medal and the sum of 2,000 francs for the best essay in connection with his labours for prison reform.

In 1755 there occurred what is known in history as the Great Earthquake of Lisbon, by which the greater part of that city was laid in ruins in five short minutes, and 60,000 of its inhabitants destroyed. The distress and misery wrought by so terrible a calamity is hard to imagine, and harder still to describe. John Howard, hearing of the sufferings and privations of those who escaped, determined to go to Lisbon and try, as far as his means would permit him, to help and give relief and succour to the afflicted ones. He was possessed of independent means, having inherited a fortune from his father, a successful London merchant. He had no ties, his wife having just died, after three years of married life, and by this affliction his heart was softened. In 1756, when about thirty years of age, he embarked for Portugal in the *Hanover*, which was captured by a French privateer and carried to Brest, where the whole crew were cast into prison. Here Howard lay night after night upon straw, and observed the cruelty which was practised; and afterwards at Morlaix and Carpaix he enlarged the area of his experience.

An exchange of prisoners having been effected, Howard returned to England, and retired to his home near Bedford, when three years later he married a second wife, and