

ROMANISM IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

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The limits set to this paper allow me to present only a few leading facts touching the history and present position of Romanism in this Province, and the efforts which are being made to deliver the people from its oppression and darkness. Popery was early and strongly established here by the King of France; and many things at the outset and subsequently conspired to promote its growth and permanency. A large number of the early settlers were from among the ranks of the nobility, and these stamped religious and other institutions with influence and respectability; while the zealous efforts of the Jesuits, who established themselves in Quebec as early as 1635, speedily banished all the Huguenots from the country, and left it entirely in the hands of Papists and specially of the Jesuits, who have since become thoroughly dominant, and now rule both Church and State in this Province. Charlevoix relates that soon after the arrival of a certain number of Jesuits and monks, there was not a single Calvinist to be found in the colony. They were all speedily expelled. Ample provision was also made to secure the propagation of Romanism among colonists of all classes and particularly among the aboriginal tribes. As an illustration of this, we find it distinctly stipulated in the charter granted in 1664, to the West India Company, which was formed to trade with New France, that the requisite number of Ecclesiastics "to preach the Holy Gospel," should be brought to the Colony. It was also provided that Churches should be built for them, and that they should have all necessary facilities for the prosecution of their work. The utmost care was taken that with the increase of population there should be abundant spiritual supervision, and that the material development of the country should not surpass the growth and prosperity of the Church. Accordingly large grants of lands were made by the King to the Jesuits, Recollets and other religious orders, for the establishment and maintenance of Seminaries, Colleges and other religious institutions. For the support of the ordinary clergy tithes were imposed on the people by Royal Edict, and to these they have tamely and patiently submitted for over two hundred years. At first the thirteenth part of everything the ground produced spontaneously or by tillage, together with the same proportion of live stock, belonged to the Church; nothing was to be omitted. The Priest must get his share of all, of grain, flax, hemp, root crops, garden fruits and tobacco. It is not surprising that such a large percentage was found to be burdensome and crushing to the spirit and industry of the people. Relief was accordingly granted in some measure by another Royal Edict in 1667.

By this ordinance tithes were limited to grains alone, and reduced to one-twenty-sixth of the whole. The law thus amended continues still in force, and all the *Habitants*, or farmers, belonging to the Romish Communion, are compelled to give this proportion of their annual income to the clergy. But this by no means represents the entire cost at which popery is sustained. There are numerous additional Church dues, connected with baptism, marriage, the burial of the dead and the offering of innumerable masses for the deliverance of their souls from Purgatory. There are heavy and oppressive