

every reform of the defective institutions of Lower Canada were laid by the Commissioners of Inquiry which he established, and by their reports contained in the Appendix to his own, or by the suggestions in the Report itself. It has been the good fortune of Mr. Poulett Thomson, acting under the suggestions made to him by Lord Durham and those attached to Lord Durham—prompted by the advice of those whom we recommended to him as his advisers—and supported by those whose goodwill our private representations secured for him, to achieve some great and useful reforms. But if he had improved the administration of justice, he found its defects marked out in Lord Durham's Report. If he had prepared a system of municipal institutions, it was Lord Durham who painted the mischiefs of the want of them, and marked out the means by which they might be erected on an efficient and liberal basis. If he has been able to establish a comprehensive and sound system of education, the necessity and the means were alike pointed out by Lord Durham's Commission. If Montreal is enfranchised, if a registry of landed property is secured, it is by the adoption of Lord Durham's measures for each purpose. And if, above all, any reform is yet effected or shall hereafter be effected in the management of the Crown lands, the credit of procuring the requisite information and of settling the principles to be adopted for the future administration of this department, is due to Lord Durham's Commission, and to it alone. All these were reforms of which neither the necessity nor the practicability were suggested to Lord Durham from home. He saw the defects, he devised the remedies; others have stepped in to appropriate the honour of the execution.

But unquestionably the most important purpose of the mission was that of effecting, or rather suggesting, such improvements in the constitution and general administration of government in Canada, as might guard us against the recurrence of the disorders that had for many years afflicted both provinces. This task remained to be performed when Lord Durham returned to England, and it has been completely performed in his Report. The praise of laborious inquiry and of comprehensive thought has never yet been refused to this document by those even who have most loudly condemned it. For it has been bitterly condemned by Tories, whose narrow and slavish notions its free principles of government could not but shock. It has been condemned by those whose attachment to the routine of our colonial policy has been revolted by the startling recommendation of a generous confidence in