

friends. When in 1822 Papineau was sent to London to protest against the proposed union of the two Canadas, no one supported his mission more strongly than Debartzch and de St Ours and a few others, some of the most influential men of the country. If later on there was a breach between them and Papineau, it was because the latter, then a fiery annexationist, assumed an attitude that to them seemed dangerous.

It was the *élite* of the population—men of learning and study—who assumed the championship of the popular claims. The mass of the people, happy in their own way, did not realize the importance of the actual and future dangers of the arbitrary colonial régime. All the constitutional agitation, as we have already tried to explain, was centred in an aristocratic movement initiated by the most intelligent of French Canadians.

We have now followed the habitants from their early days to the present time, in their transformation from French settlers brought up under absolutism into British citizens. After the vicissitudes of three centuries they stand before the world a distinct national group, firmly planted in North America.

Will the habitants hold their own in time to come? Will they maintain their influence among their competitors in the friendly race for welfare and wealth? Will the various French-Canadian communities throughout Canada and the United States maintain themselves as separate units, with their own ideals? These are grave questions to answer. Speaking from a French-Canadian point of view, there is reason to fear that outside Quebec the smaller groups will become absorbed by the surrounding population. This has already happened in several centres. Yet there are in the United States many settlements of twenty and even thirty thousand Canadians growing up in industrial centres by themselves. With a strong clannish spirit, intensified perhaps by the action of certain bishops bent on Americanizing them, they cling together in their increasing efforts to keep up the old faith and the old language. These communities may maintain their individuality for a long time, but the