

apparently, been contending for popular rights and free government. The executive government had been defending the prerogative of the Crown, and the institutions which, in accordance with the principles of the British Constitution, had been established as checks on the unbridled exercise of popular power. Though, during the dispute, indications had been given of the existence of dissensions yet deeper and more formidable than any which arose from simply political causes, I had still, in common with most of my countrymen, imagined that the original and constant source of the evil was to be found in the defects of the political institutions of the Provinces; that a reform of the constitution, or perhaps merely the introduction of a sounder practice into the administration of the government, would remove all causes of contest and complaint. This opinion was strengthened by the well-known fact, that the political dissensions which had produced their most formidable results in this Province, had assumed a similar, though milder, form in the neighbouring Colonies; and that the tranquillity of each of the North American Provinces was subject to constant disturbance from collision between the executive and the representatives of the people. The constitutions of these Colonies, the official characters and positions of the contending parties, the avowed subjects of dispute, and the general principles asserted on each side, were so similar, that I could not but concur in the very general opinion, that the common quarrel was the result of some common defect in the almost identical institutions of these Provinces. I looked on it as a dispute analogous to those with which history and experience have made us so familiar in Europe,—a dispute between a people demanding an extension of popular privileges, on the one hand, and an executive, on the other, defending the powers which it conceived necessary for the maintenance of order. I supposed that my principal business would be that of determining how far each party might be in the right, or which was in the wrong; of devising some means of removing the defects which had occasioned the collision; and of restoring such a balance of the constitutional powers as might secure the free and peaceful working of the machine of government.

The real struggle
not one of principles,
but of races.

In a Despatch which I addressed to Your Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies on the 9th of August last, I detailed, with great minuteness, the impressions which had been produced on my mind by the state of things which existed in Lower Canada: I acknowledged that the experience derived from my residence in the Province had completely changed my view of the relative influence of the causes which had been assigned for the existing disorders. I had not, indeed, been brought to believe that the institutions of Lower Canada were less defective than I had originally presumed them to be. From the peculiar circumstances in which I was placed, I was enabled to make such effectual observations as convinced me that there had existed in the constitution of the Province, in the balance of political powers, in the spirit and practice of administration in every department of the Government, defects that were quite sufficient to account for a great degree of mismanagement and dissatisfaction. The same observation had also impressed on me the conviction, that, for the peculiar and disastrous dissensions of this Province, there existed a far deeper and far more efficient cause,—a cause which penetrated beneath its political institutions into its social state,—a cause which no reform of constitution or laws, that should leave the elements of society unaltered, could remove; but which must be removed, ere any success could be expected in any attempt to remedy the many evils of this unhappy Province. I expected to find a contest between a government and a people: I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state: I found a struggle, not of principles, but of races; and I perceived that it would be idle to attempt any amelioration of laws or institutions until we could first succeed in terminating the deadly animosity that now separates the inhabitants of Lower Canada into the hostile divisions of French and English.

Animosities
between the French
and English.

It would be vain for me to expect that any description I can give will impress on Your Majesty such a view of the animosity of these races as my personal experience in Lower Canada has forced on me. Our happy immunity from any feelings of national hostility, renders it difficult for us to comprehend the intensity of the hatred which the difference of language, of laws, and of manners, creates between those who inhabit the same village, and are citizens of the same state. We are ready to believe that the real motive of the quarrel is something else; and that the difference of race has slightly and occasionally aggravated dissensions, which we attribute to some more usual cause. Experience of a state of society, so unhappily divided as that of Lower Canada, leads to