

Who can believe that the moulding influences will be the same in arctic continents or in tropical islands as in countries lying within the temperate zone? Among the colonies, those, perhaps, which most nearly resemble each other in political character and circumstances, are Canada and Australia; yet the elements of the population are very different—and still more different are the external relations of Australia, with no other power near her, from those of Canada, not only conterminous with the United States, but interlaced with them, so that at present the road of the Governor-General of Canada, when he visits his Pacific province, lies through the territory of the American Republic. Is it possible to suppose that the slender filament which connects each of these colonies with Downing Street is the thread of a common destiny?

In studying Canadian politics, and in attempting to cast the political horoscope of Canada, the first thing to be remembered, though official optimism is apt to overlook it, is that Canada was a colony not of England but of France, and that between the British of Ontario and the British of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are interposed, in solid and unyielding mass, above a million of unassimilated and politically antagonistic Frenchmen. French Canada is a relic of the historical past preserved by isolation, as Siberian mammoths are preserved in ice. It is a fragment of the France before the Revolution, less the monarchy and the aristocracy; for the feeble parody of French feudalism in America ended with the abolition of the seigniories, which may be regarded as the final renunciation of feudal ideas and institutions by society in the New World. The French-Canadians are an unprogressive, religious, submissive, courteous, and, though poor, not unhappy people. They would make excellent factory-hands if Canada had a market for her manufactures; and, perhaps, it is as much due to the climate as to their lack of intelligent industry, that they have a very indifferent reputation as farmers. They are governed by the priest, with the occasional assistance of the notary; and the Roman Catholic Church may be said to be still established in the province, every Roman Catholic being bound to pay tithes and other ecclesiastical imposts, though the Protestant minority are exempt. The Church is immensely rich, and her wealth is always growing, so that the economical element which mingled with the religious causes of the Reformation may one day have its counterpart in Quebec. The French-Canadians, as we have said, retain their exclusive national character. So far from being absorbed by the British population, or Anglicized by contact with it, they have absorbed and Gallicized the fragments of British population which chance has thrown amongst them; and the children of Highland regiments disbanded in Quebec have become thorough Frenchmen, and prefixed Jean Baptiste to their Highland names. For his own Canada the Frenchman of Quebec has something of a patriotic feeling; for France he has filial affection enough to make his heart beat violently for her during a Franco-German war; for England, it may be safely said, he has no feeling whatever. It is true that he fought against the American invaders in the Revolutionary War, and again in 1812; but then he was animated by his ancient hostility to the Puritans of New England, in the factories of whose descendants he now freely seeks employment. Whether he would enthusiastically take up arms for England against the Americans at present, the British War-Office, after the experience of the two Fenian raids, can no doubt tell. With Upper Canada, the land of Scotch Presbyterians, Irish Orangemen, and ultra-British sentiment, French Canada, during the union of the two provinces, led an uneasy life; and she accepted confederation, on terms which leave her nationality untouched, rather as a severance of her special wedlock with her unloved consort than as a measure of North American union. The unabated antagonism between the two races and the two religions was plainly manifested on the occasion of the conflict between the French half-breeds and the British immigrants in Manitoba, which presented a faint parallel to the conflict between the advanced posts of slavery and anti-slavery in Kansas on the eve of the civil war; Quebec