

any sort, and every way incapable of exerting any real political influence in the Province, it remains for some time a mere cipher, powerless as a check upon official abuse, but mischievous, because an effectual check upon every attempt at legislative innovation. The great majority of its members are necessarily of the language and origin of the great majority of the people; sharers, of course, in all their natural prepossessions in favour of existing institutions, as opposed to those which every British settler must as naturally desire to introduce in place of them. What part could such a body play, but the part it did play? Meanwhile the high offices of the Crown within the Colony, continue with few exceptions, as in the earliest period after the conquest, in the hands of individuals selected from the small minority of British origin; and the new Councils, Executive and Legislative, are both formed, almost as exclusively, from the ranks of these officials. What but collision, sooner or later, could possibly result from a state of things at its commencement so inauspicious?

As years passed on, the Assembly gradually began to assert its powers; the minority of British origin among its members, at the same time almost as gradually growing less and less. The Councils by very slow degrees became a little less exclusively official in their composition; while the official body received some further accessions from among the older French Canadian families, without, however, at all losing, either for itself or for the Councils, the character of general exclusiveness as regarded French Canadians, which it had originally.—A more important change was meanwhile quietly going on among the community at large, though still so slowly as for a number of years to excite nothing like general attention. One immediate effect of the conquest had been to throw the commerce of the country into the hands of British merchants resident in Quebec and Montreal; and as a necessary consequence, many of their countrymen were before long led to settle in one part or other of the Province,—the cities naturally drawing to themselves a large proportion of their number. The neighbouring States also furnished their full quota of immigrants, most of them agricultural settlers, tempted by the new lands of the Eastern townships. These causes could not but materially affect the relative proportions of the French

and English races in the Colony; and thus a mixed Anglo-Canadian population, of British, Irish and American extraction, rose silently but steadily into unobserved importance.

Changes like these could have but one tendency. Two quarrels were inevitable; the first in order of time, a quarrel for political ascendancy on the part of the Assembly, with the official body, and by necessary consequence with the Councils, and with the Executive,—which unwisely in the first instance took part with them; the second, a struggle for essential changes in the law of the land, between the new population and the old, the one anxious to make the resources of the country more available to its own enterprise, the other clinging with excusable tenacity to its own usages, and soon extending its jealousy and dislike of innovation to the innovators themselves. Neither quarrel, had it stood alone, could have resulted as the two together actually have done. Each made the other worse. The political struggle served to lengthen and embitter, while it masked, the war of races,—a war which otherwise would most likely have been quietly over, long before this time; and this national dispute in turn exercised the same untoward influence on the political. The Assembly, commencing with the most unexceptionable demands, and meeting from the official party an opposition as obstinate as it was unjustifiable and impolitic, gained one advantage after another, after delays in each case that served to render its leaders increasingly discontented, and yet just fast enough to keep alive their hopes, and stimulate them perpetually to urge upon the Government the fresh demands which their growing discontent suggested. The population of British extraction, influenced at first more by its political sympathies with the representatives of the people, than by the ties of language and origin between it and the official body, transferred its preferences, as the French Canadian leanings of the Assembly became from time to time more evident. An opportunity thus offered for the Council party, to profess itself the champion of British, as opposed to French Canadian interests; and, with little or no real confidence between the parties, an alliance between them, seemingly of the most intimate description, was the consequence. But one thing more was wanting to complete the confusion and bring things to a crisis. The home Government,