

LORNA DOONE

B. R. D. BLACKMORE.
CHAPTER XXXIV

TWO NEGATIVES MAKE AN AFFIRMATIVE

There was, however, no possibility of depressing me at such a time. To be loved by Lorna, the sweet, the pure, the playful one, the fairest creature on God's earth, and the most enchanting, the lady of high birth and mind; that I, a mere clumsy, blundering yeoman, without wit, or wealth, or lineage, should have won that loving heart to be my own forever, was a thought no fears could lessen and no chance could steal from me.

Therefore, at her own entreaty, taking a very quick adieu, and by her own invitation, an exceeding kind one, I hurried home with deep excitement, yet some sad misgivings, for Lorna had made me promise now to tell my mother everything; as, indeed, I always meant to do, when my suit should be gone too far to stop. I knew, of course, that my dear mother would be greatly moved and vexed, the help of Lorna Doone not being a very desirable thing in her eyes, and that, as she would be disappointed as to little Ruth Huckleback, feeling my mother's tenderness and deep affection to me, and forgiving nature, I doubted not that before very long she would view the matter as I did. Moreover, I felt that, if once I could get her only to look at Lorna, she would so love and glory in her, that I should obtain all praise and thanks, perchance without deserving them.

Unluckily for my designs, who should be sitting down at breakfast with my mother and the rest but Squire Faggus, as everybody now began to entitle him. I noticed something odd about him, something uncomfortable in his manner, and a lack of that ease and humor which had been wont to distinguish him. He took his breakfast as he came, without a single joke about it, or preference of this to that, but with sly, soft looks at Annie, who seemed unable to sit quiet, or to look at any one steadfastly. I feared in my heart what was coming on, and felt truly sorry for poor mother. After breakfast it became my duty to see to the plowing of a barley stubble, ready for the sowing of French grass, and I asked Tom Faggus to come with me; but he refused, and I knew the reason. Being resolved to allow him fair field to himself, though with great displeasure that a man of such illegal reputation should marry into our family, which had always been counted so honest, I carried my dinner upon my back, and spent the whole day with the farmers.

When I returned, Squire Faggus was gone; which appeared to me but a sorry sign, inasmuch as if mother had taken kindly to him and to his intentions, she would surely have made him remain a while to celebrate the occasion. And presently no doubt was left; for Lizzie came running to meet me at the bottom of the woodrick, and cried:

"Oh, John, there is such a business! Mother is in such a state of mind, and Annie crying her eyes out! What do you think? You never would guess, though I have suspected it ever so long."

"No need for me to guess," I replied, as though with some indifference because, when I heard of such an important air about it, I had long ago, you have not seen me crying much. I see. I should like you better if you had."

"Why should I cry? I like Tom Faggus. He is the only one I ever see with the spirit of a man."

"This was a out, of course, at me. Mr. Faggus had won the good-will of Lizzie by his hatred of the Doones, and vowing that if he could get a dozen men of any courage to join him, he would pull their stronghold about their ears without any more ado. This malice of his seemed strange to me, as he had never suffered at their hands, so far at least, as I knew. Was it to be attributed to his jealousy of outlaws who excelled him in his business? Not being good at repartee, I made no answer to Lizzie, having found this course more agreeable to her than the very best invective; and so we entered the house together; and mother sent at once for me while I was trying to console my darling sister Annie.

"Oh, John I speak one good word for me," she cried, with both hands laid in mine, and her tearful eyes looking up at me.

"Not one, my pet, but a hundred," I answered, kindly embracing her; "have no fear, little sister; I am going to make your case so bright, by comparison, I mean, that mother will send for you in five minutes, and call you her best, her most dutiful child, and praise Cousin Tom to the skies, and send a man on horseback after him; and then you will have a harder task to intercede for me, my dear."

"Oh, John, dear John, you won't tell her about Lorna—oh not to-day dear."

"Yes, to-day, and at once, Annie. I want to have it over, and be done with it."

"Oh, but think of her, dear. I am sure she could not bear it, after this great shock already."

"She will bear it all the better," said I; "the one will drive the other out. I know exactly what mother is. She will be desperately savage first with you, and then with me, and then for a very little while with both of us together, and then she will put one against the other (in her mind, I mean), and consider which was most to blame; and in doing that she will be compelled to find the best in either one, that it may beat the other; and so as the pleases come before her mind, they will gain upon the charges, both of us being very long (particularly if we both keep out of the way) she will begin to think that after all she has been a little too hasty; and then she will remember how good we have always been to her, and how like our father. Upon that she will think of her own love time, and sigh a good bit and cry a little, and then smile, and send for both of us, and beg our pardon, and call us her two darlings."

"Now, John, how on earth can you know all that?" exclaimed my sister, wiping her eyes, and gazing at me with a soft bright smile. "Who on earth can have told you, John? People do call you stupid, indeed! Why I feel that all you say is quite true, because you describe so exactly what I should do myself; I mean—I mean if I had two children, who had behaved as we have

done. But tell me, darling John, how you learned all this."

"Never you mind," I replied, with a nod of some conceit, I fear; "I must be a fool if I did not know what mother is by this time."

"Now, inasmuch as the thing befell according to my prediction, what need for me to dwell upon it, after saying how it would be? Moreover, I would regret to write down what mother said about Lorna, in her first surprise and tribulation; not only because I was grieved by the gross injustice of it, and frightened mother with her own words (repeated deeply after her); but rather because it is not well, when people repent of hasty speech, to enter it against them.

"That is said to be the angels' business; and I doubt if they can attend to it much, without doing injury to themselves."

However, by the afternoon, when the sun began to go down upon us, our mother sat on the garden bench, with her hand on her great water-skin waistcoat (which was water-proof) and her right arm around our Annie's waist, and scarcely knowing which of us she ought to make the most of, or which deserved most pity. Not that she had forgiven yet the rivals to her love—Tom Faggus, I mean, and Lorna—but that she was beginning to think a little better of them now, and a vast deal better of her own children.

And it helped her much in this regard, that she was not thinking half so well as usual of herself, or rather of her own judgment; for in good truth she had no self, only as it came home to her, by no very distant road, but by way of her children. A better mother never lived; and can I, after searching all things, add another word to that?

Now, indeed, poor Lizzie was not so very bad; but behaved (on the whole) very well for her. She was much to be pitied, poor thing, and great allowance made for her, as belonging to a well-grown family, and a very comely one, and feeling her own shortcomings. This made her leap to the other extreme, and reassert herself too much, endeavoring to exalt the mind at the expense of the body; because she had the invisible one (so far as can be decided) in better share than the visible. Not but what she had her points, and very comely points of body; lovely eyes, to wit, and very beautiful hands and feet (almost as good as Lorna's), and a neck as white as snow; but Lizzie was not gifted with our gait and port, and bounding health.

Now, while we sat on the garden bench, under the great ash-tree, we left dear mother to take her own way, and talk at her own pleasure. Children almost always are more wide-awake than their parents. The fathers and the mothers laugh; but the young ones have the best of them. And now both Annie knew, and I, that we had gotten the best of mother; and therefore we let her lay down the law as if we had been two dollsies.

"Darling John," my mother said, "your case is a very hard one. A young and very romantic girl—God send that I be right in my charitable view of her—has met an equally simple boy, among great dangers and difficulties, from which my son has saved her, at the risk of his life at every step. Of course, she became attached to him—and looked up to him in every way as to a superior being."

"Come now, mother," I said; "if you only saw Lorna, you would look upon me as the lowest dirt."

"No doubt I should," my mother answered; "and the king, and queen, and all of the royal family. Well, this poor angel, having made up her mind to take compassion upon my son, when he had saved her life so many times, persuades him to marry her out of pure pity, and throw his poor mother overboard. And the saddest part of it all is this—"

"That my mother will never, never, understand the truth," said I.

"That is all I wish," she answered; "just to get at the simple truth from my own perception of it. John, you are very wise in kissing me; but perhaps you would not be so wise in bringing Lorna for an afternoon, just to see what she thinks of me. There is a good saddle of mutton now, and there are some very good sausages left on the blue dish with an anchor, Annie, from the last little sow we killed."

"As if Lorna would eat sausages!" said I, with appearance of high contempt, though rejoicing all the while that mother seemed to have her name so pat; and she pronounced it in a manner which made my heart leap to my ears: "Lorna to eat sausages!"

"I don't see why she shouldn't," my mother answered, smiling; "if she means to be a farmer's wife, she must take to farmers ways, I think. What do you say, Annie?"

"She will eat whatever John desires, I should hope," said Annie, gravely; "particularly as I made them."

"Oh, that I could only get the chance of trying her!" I answered. "If you could once behold her, mother, you would never let her go again. And she would love you with all her heart, she is so good and gentle."

"That is a lucky thing for me." Saying this, my mother wept, as she had been doing off and on, when no one seemed to look at her; "otherwise, I suppose, John, she would very soon turn me out of the farm, having you so completely under her thumb, as she seems to have. I see now that my time is over. Lizzie and I will seek our fortunes. It is wisest so."

"Now mother," I cried, "will you have the kindness not to talk any nonsense? Everything belongs to you; and so, I hope, your children do. And you, in turn, belong to us; as you have proved ever since—oh, ever since we can remember. Why do you make Annie cry so? You ought to know better than that."

"Mother, upon this, vent over all the things she had done before; how many times I know not; neither does it matter. Only she seemed to enjoy it more, every time of doing it. And then she said she was an old fool, and Annie (like a thorough girl) pulled her one gray hair out."

CHAPTER XXXV.

RUTH IS NOT LIKE LORNA

Although, by our mother's reluctant consent, a large part of the obstacles between Annie and her lover appeared to be removed, on the other hand Lorna and myself gained little, except as regarded comelf of mind, and some ease to the conscience. Moreover, our chance of frequent meetings and delightful converse was much impaired, at least for the present; because though mother was not aware of my narrow escape from Carver Doone, she made me promise never to risk my life by needless visits. And upon this point—that is to say, the necessity of the visit—she was well content, as she said, to leave me to my own good sense and honor; only begging me always to tell her of my intention beforehand. This pledge, however, for her own sake, I declined to give, knowing how wretched she would be during all the time of my absence, and on that account I promised instead, that I would always give her a full account of my adventure upon returning.

Now my mother, as might be expected, began at once to cast about for some means of relieving me from all my peril, and herself from great anxiety. She was full of plans for fetching Lorna in some wonderful manner out of the power of the Doones entirely, and into her own hands, where she was to remain at least a twelvemonth, learning all mother and Annie could teach her of dairy business, and farm-house life, and the best mode of packing butter. And all this arose from my happening to say, without meaning anything, how the poor dear had longed for quiet, and a life of simplicity, and a rest away from violence! Bless thee, mother—now long in heaven, there is no need to bless thee; but it often makes a dimness now in my well-worn eyes, when I think of thy loving kindness, warmth and romantic innocence.

As to stealing my beloved from that wicked Doone, the deed itself was not impossible, nor beyond my daring; but, in the first place, would she come, leaving her old grandfather to die, without her tendance? And even if, through fear of Carver and that wicked Councilor, she should consent to fly, would it be possible to keep her without a regiment of soldiers? Would not the Doones at once ride forth to scour the country for their queen, and finding her (as they must do), burn our house and murder us, and carry her back triumphantly?

All this I laid before my mother, and to such effect that she acknowledged, with a sigh that nothing else remained for me (in the present state of matters) except to keep a careful watch upon Lorna from safe distance, observe the policy of the Doones, and wait for a tide in their affairs. Meanwhile I might even fall in love (as mother unwisely hinted) with a certain more peaceful heiress, although of inferior blood, who would be daily at my elbow. I am not sure but what dear mother herself would have been disappointed had I proved myself so fickle; and my disdain and indignation at the mere suggestion did not so much displease her, for she only smiled and answered:

"Well, it is not for me to say; God knows what is good for us. Likings will not come to order; otherwise I should not be where I am this day. And of one thing I am rather glad; Uncle Reuben will deserve that his pet scheme should miscarry—he who called my boy a coward, an ignoble coward, because he would not join some crack-brained plan against the valley which sheltered his beloved one! And all the time this dreadful 'coward' risking his life daily there, without a word to any one! How glad I am that you will not have, for all her miserable money, that little dwarfish granddaughter of the insolent old miser!"

She turned, and by her side was standing poor Ruth Huckleback herself, white and sad, and looking steadily at my mother's face, which became as red as a plum, while her breath deserted her.

"If you please, madam," said the little maiden, with her large calm eyes unwavering, "it is not my fault, but God Almighty's, that I am a little dwarfish creature. I know not that you regard me with so much contempt on this account; neither have you told my grandfather, at least within my hearing, that he was an insolent old miser. When I return to Dulverton, which I trust to do to-morrow (for it is too late to-day), I shall be careful not to tell him your opinion of him, lest I should thwart any schemes you may have upon his property. I thank you all for your kindness to me, which has been very great; far more than a little dwarfish creature could, for her own sake, expect. I will only add, for your further guidance, one more little truth. It is by no means certain that my grandfather will settle any of his miserable money upon me. If I were him, as I would be in a moment, for the sake of a brave and generous man—here she gave me a glance which I scarcely knew what to do with—"my grandfather, upright as he is, would leave me without a shilling. And I often wish it were so. So many miseries come upon me from the miserable money—" Here she broke down, and burst into crying, and ran away with a faint good-by, while we three looked at one another, and felt that we had the worst of it.

"Impudent little dwarf!" said my mother, recovering her breath after ever so long. "Oh, John, how thankful you ought to be! What a life she would have led you!"

"Well, I am sure," said Annie, throwing her arms around poor mother, "who could have thought that little fellow had such an outrageous spirit! For my part, I cannot think how she could have been sly enough to hide it in that crafty manner, that John might think her an angel!"

"Well, for my part," I answered, laughing, "I never admired Ruth Huckleback half or a quarter so much before. She is rare stuff. I would have been glad to have married her to-morrow, if I had never seen my Lorna."

"And a nice nobody I should have been, in my own house!" cried mother; "I never can be thankful enough to darling Lorna for saving me. Did you see how her eyes flashed?"

"That I did; and very fine they were. Now the maidens out of ten would have feigned not to have heard one word that was said, and have borne black malice in their hearts. Come, Annie, now, would not you have done so?"

"I think," said Annie, "although of course I cannot tell—you know, John—that I should have been ashamed at hearing what was never meant for me, and should have been almost as angry with myself as anybody."

"So you would," replied my mother; "so any daughter of mine would have done, instead of railing and reviling.

and she answered that she hardly knew, but remembered that her grandfather had begged her to give it up to him when she was ten years old or so, and had promised to keep it for her until she could take care of it; at the same time giving her back the ring, and fastening it upon her pretty neck, and telling her to be proud of it. And so she always had been, and now from her sweet breast she took it, and it became John Ridd's delight.

All this, or at least great part of it, I told my mother truly, according to my promise; and she was greatly pleased with Lorna for having been so good to me, and for speaking so very sensibly; and then she looked at the great gold ring, but could by no means interpret it. Only she was quite certain, as indeed I myself was, that it must have belonged to an ancient race of great consideration, and high rank, in their time. Upon which I was for taking it off, lest it should be degraded by a common farmer's finger. But mother said, "No," with tears in her eyes; "if the common farmer had won the great lady of the ancient race, what were rings and Old-World trinkets, when compared to the living jewel?" Being quite of her opinion in this, and loving the ring (which had no gem in it) as the token of my priceless gem, I resolved to wear it at any cost, except when I should be plowing, or doing things likely to break it; although I must own that it felt very queer (for I never had thought of a finger before), and it looked very queer, for a length of time, upon my great hard-working hand.

And before I got used to my ring, or people could think that it belonged to me (plain and ungarlish though it was), and before I went to see Lorna again, having failed to find any necessity, and remembering my duty to mother, we all had something else to think of, not so pleasant, and more puzzling.

TO BE CONTINUED.

AN OLD COUPLE

The misfortune of John and Ellen Luff was that they had lived too long. Their mistress before she died had made provision for them, counting that they would live to seventy-five or so. But now John was eighty-six and Ellen eighty-two, and the provision had been spent ten years ago. During the greater part of these ten years they had been kept alive by the sixpences collected by a charitable soul who had come to be aware of their necessity. But now their benefactress was gone, and there was nothing at all between them and starvation.

They had covered up their poverty jealously. Little by little during these ten years they had parted with the pieces of furniture which old Mrs. Kynaston had left them as part of her legacy.

A young doctor had been very kind to them. He had given them medicine and nourishing things out of his own pocket, and had accepted with a delicate understanding the shillings the man paid him from time to time for his fees. To be sure, they found their way straight back to the fund collected for the old people by their benefactress.

The doctor was young and bright-eyed, with a kindly and humorous shrewdness of expression in his keen, clever face. He was on his probation down here in this sium that once was country. But presently he knew he would be among the great men in Harley street or Cavendish Square. He knew the things he had done and was capable of doing. Meanwhile he was poor and ambitious, a glutton for work and head over ears in love.

The thought of the old couple put a pucker between his brows, even while he sat by Margaret Steele's side at dinner that evening. He had no thought of keeping from her the thing that was worrying him. She had the key of his heart, and could wring from him every secret except one, if his love for her could really be called a secret.

He told her about John and Ellen Luff as he had seen them and as he imagined them. "Ah," she said softly once or twice, and there was a world of hurt pity in the exclamation. Looking at her admiringly, he thought she had the compassion of all the world in her face.

She said no more, as though he had discouraged her. They talked of other things, of the newest discoveries in science and medicine—the things that interested him most. She was delightfully intelligent. With such a woman for his Egeria what might not a man do?

"Well," he said to the old couple next day, "have you made up your minds?"

They seemed to him to lean a little closer together, and his heart smote him.

"I shouldn't be able to look after you much longer, for I think of joining an expedition to South Africa. Sister Gertrude in the infirmary has promised me to be very good to Luff. At your side of the house, Mrs Luff, there is an excellent woman in charge. You'll be surprised to find how pleasant it all is when you get there, and will wonder why you ever dreaded it so much."

The old couple seemed as if they had not heard this well-meant consolation. "You'll be ready to go Friday, shall we say?" Dr. Saville said with a cheerfulness he was far from feeling.

"Oh, yes, it might as well be Friday as another day," John Luff said. "Might happen the Lord 'ud call us before Friday."

He had very nearly made up his mind to join the African expedition. The pursuit of the thing that caused one of the most horrible diseases into the deadly swamp where it lurked was fascinating to him. If he came out of it alive it meant reputation. If he didn't—Well, he couldn't go to Margaret now as he was. It was now Tuesday afternoon, and on Friday they were to go into the House. They had just three days to be together, three days in which the Lord might call them.

After a time they began to talk. They had the memories of very old people for things of long ago, while things of yesterday were dim to them. Old Madam and Miss Agatha and Miss Agatha's baby were in their talk.

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But if the Lord would call them before Friday was a sudden tapping at the door, and a lady came in bringing a smell of violets with her. The east wind blew bravely outside, and she was wearing furs over her purple dress. She glowed in them as palely warm as a white rose that has a flush in it.

Old Ellen got up and set her a chair. She flashed a quick glance around the room, almost empty of furniture. Her eyes took in the parcels on the table, then went on to the wondering faces of the old couple.

"Dr. Saville is a friend of mine," she said softly. Her voice was as sweet as her face. "He has told me about you. Your names are John and Ellen Luff. I think you must once have lived with my grandmother, Mrs. Kynaston, of Eastney Park, Hampshire."

"It isn't Miss Margot?" said John incredulously, while Ellen came nearer and peered with her blind eyes into the beautiful, delicate face.

"Yes, I am Miss Margot. I remember quite well how you taught me to ride, John. And I remember you, Ellen, displaying my grandmother's finery for my delight on wet afternoons. I liked you better than my nurse. And I remember once we had out all the furniture of my doll house and gave it a thorough spring cleaning. Do you remember that, Ellen?"

"For sure I do, Miss Margot. Many times me and Luff have talked about it."

"I oughtn't to have lost sight of you," she went on, looking from one face to the other. "Only we spent so many years abroad. And I thought, I thought—"

"We didn't ought to have lived as long, Miss Margot," cried John apologetically.

"She laughed softly, and her eyes were dimmed.

"Ah, well, I am very glad you have lived," she said, "and most grateful to Dr. Saville for finding you for me."

"John wouldn't be here only for him. The bottles of wine he's sent and the medicines! We had no fire to-day till he sent it, and all these things from the store." Ellen vaguely indicated the table. "May the Lord reward him!"

Miss Margot glowed more than ever, and leant forward a little over her huge muff. The fire sparkled in the jewels that clasped her sable stole and set up other fires in the depths of her eyes.

"And now," she said, "wouldn't you like to come back to Eastney? The west lodge is empty, but it is in order, and you can come at once. I have a woman who will look after you both and see that Ellen hasn't too much to do. And we have all the summer before us. What do you think of it?"

"Oh, Lord," said John, "and we were to have gone into the House on Friday!"

"We thought we were to be friendless and forgotten—the doctor going off to Africa, where most likely than not he'll leave his bones," said Ellen. "We little thought the Lord was sending us you."

"Africa?" Miss Margot repeated in a startled way. "Who said he was going to Africa?"

"Himself, sitting in that very chair."

"I will come back and tell you what he says," said Miss Margot, rising up with a soft rustle. "A carriage shall come for you, so that you won't be exposed to the east wind. Now good-bye for a little while."

She was shown into the consulting room, where he sat writing busily at a table. The room was fundamentally dreary, with its dusty carpet, its heavy red curtains and wire screens to the windows, its fire almost out, its general air of neglect and dust, as dreary as the mean street outside swept by the east wind. Yet to her it was beautiful because he was there. It was enough for the moment that they were alone in such a solitude as they had never known before.

He sprang to his feet with a little cry of delight at beholding her. The white lids veiled her conscious eyes; the color flamed in her cheeks.

"You will wonder why on earth I have come," she said.

"For the moment it is enough that you are here," he said, setting a chair for her with an exhilarated laugh. The smell of her violets was heavy, intoxicating.

"I came down to see your old people, John and Ellen Luff. They proved to be, as I thought they might when you told me their names, old servants of my grandmother's. They are going back to Eastney Park. They will have a lodge to themselves and a woman I am interested in, a widow, to see that they don't fall into the fire. I came to ask you when they might go. To-morrow?"

"They must have thought you were an angel," he said. "They may go whenever they are ready. The sooner they are out of their present abode the better. Eastney will be heaven."

She looked down at the muff in her lap and a quiver of agitation passed over her face. She opened her lips as though to speak once or twice, and he had an idea that her hands clasped each other nervously in the covering of the muff.

"What is it?" he asked. "What is it—dear?"

"They told me you were going to Africa," she said, "to that place you told me of the other night. Let some one else do it, some one who has less to live for. Not you. You mustn't go. I should—should—"

She burst suddenly into tears and hid her face. Then she was sobbing in his arms.—Katharine Tynan (abridged).

RACE AND RELIGION IN CANADA

Mr. Francis W. Grey, of Ottawa, in the Month.

During the past year, the Catholics of Canada have been exhorted, Sunday after Sunday, to pray earnestly that "peace and harmony amongst us . . . may happily result from" the first Plenary Council held in British North America. That there is more than common need for such a prayer, more, even, than such an important occasion inevitably demands, no one familiar with Canadian ecclesiastical conditions, and with the circumstances and questions arising out of them, can fail to admit. It appears, however, that certain explanations and statistics are necessary in order to render these conditions, circumstances, and questions, most of all the implied lack of peace and harmony, intelligible to English readers. They may, therefore, be briefly given here, and wherever in the course of this article they may seem to be required or called for.

The total population of the Dominion according to the last census, taken in 1901, is given by the Canada Year Book, 1908, as 5,371,315. The total Catholic population, according to the same authority, was at that date 2,229,600, or rather more than fifty per cent. of the whole. Of these, according to Le Canada Ecclesiastique, 1906, 1,649,000 were of French Canadian origin, those of all other origins, chiefly Irish, Scottish, and English, 580,000. This gives at once an overwhelming majority of French Canadian Catholics, a fact which must always be taken into account with respect to the subject to be discussed. With respect, moreover, to Ontario and Quebec, the two Provinces that chiefly concern us, the figures are not less noteworthy. The total population of the latter Province is given, as above, as being 1,648,000; the total Catholic population is 1,423,260; the French Canadians among these last numbering 1,322,110. Both the Protestant minority, therefore, and the English-speaking Catholic minority, form a very small percentage of the whole.

Coming to Ontario, we find the total population given as 2,182,947, with only 390,304 Catholics. Of these 158,670, somewhat less than half, are of French Canadian origin, chiefly, it may be said, in the archdiocese and city of Ottawa, and in the suffragan sees of Pontiac and Pembroke. Moreover, to complete these statistics, has a Catholic population of 70,000; the new Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, 32,000; British Columbia, 31,000, the remainder being found in the Maritime Provinces.

The two Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, however, as already stated, the one as overwhelmingly Protestant as the other is Catholic, are those in which racial and religious problems would most naturally arise. That these problems, commonly known as the Race Question, do exist there can be no doubt at all. They are, indeed, at the root of all the political, constitutional, and educational questions affecting the Dominion; their chief interests for Catholics consisting in the fact that they affect no less surely all matters relating to the Church in British North America.

In saying this as I do, with all the diffidence of a mere observer, and of a layman dealing with matters that trench very closely on the domain ecclesiastical, I am not unconscious of the fact that the friction arising inevitably out of the conditions above detailed has of late years appeared to lose, if it has not actually lost, much of its earlier acerbity and virulence, though it must not for that reason be by any means regarded as extinct. I mean that, taking the most favorable view possible of the actual situation, there can, I think, be no question that, whether as an active antagonism, as an uneasy consciousness of friction, or as a regrettable tradition, a certain racial difference, whether of Church or State, does exist, and must be taken into account.

It is this difference, then, this friction between one race and another, and not merely as between Protestants and Catholics, as it concerns the growth, the welfare, and the good estate of Christ's Holy Catholic Church in Canada, that we are here to consider. And this because, strange as it may appear to readers of The Month, the division exists, racially, no less between those of the Household of Faith than between those whose creeds, as well as whose nationality, are as wide apart as they can well be. It is naturally a difficult matter to treat of, lest, all unwittingly,

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