

haunted in the strangling grasp of kingly power. The vehement struggles of the Parliament of Paris for the rights of the "third Estate" had not wholly ceased, and that last effort of a gallant people for their expiring liberties, the Insurrection of the Fronde, which shook the minority of the 14th Louis, had not yet passed from the sympathies and memory of Frenchmen. The popular rights of the nation had not yet sunk into that dull lethargy which froze their energy for so many long years, till startled into warmth and life by the spreading flames and the wild trumpet of the revolution. Yet the emigrants who pitched their tents in a North American forest seemed to have not even a wish to form in the vast heart of new France even the semblance of a popular Government. In this they displayed the leading difference between their character and that of their Anglo-Saxon rivals for Empire. To this may doubtless be traced back the marvellous dissimilarity in the result of their respective labours. One race laboured to lay broad and deep the foundations of a mighty society, not unworthy of the glorious stock from whence it sprang, imitating all that was splendid in the institutions of its parent, and endeavouring to reject what was acknowledged to be vicious, or at the best, useless:—the other made no such effort, and from choice or apathy, each individual abandoning all his relative duties as a member of a civilized community, took no thought about the laws by which he was ruled, and hardly seemed to be aware of the character of his rulers.

As the 18th century advanced, the difference between the progress of the French and British American Colonies became more and more apparent. During this period the English navy was gradually proving its superiority over that of France, and Hawke, Benbow, and Boscawen, were acquiring brilliant reputations at the expence of their fallen foes. As her inferiority on the seas became more evident, the condition and prospects of her Colonies became darker, and France early in that century must have felt the reins slipping from her hands. The communication between the Mother Country and her American possessions, dependent as they were to a great extent on her exertions for their maintenance, became every year more difficult; and as the indefatigable perseverance of her southern neighbours was gradually extending northward the name and influence of

England, she was losing the confidence and support of her Indian allies, and becoming more and more isolated and dependent on European aid. The life of the French Colonist was during the many eventful years that preceded the conquest of Quebec, a most unenviable existence. The constant warfare with the British and aborigines incessantly called the yeoman from the plough to the garrison.—The lands were necessarily left uncultivated, while the peasantry were fighting for their very lives with an apparently exhaustless and indestructible foe. Writers of that period gave a melancholy picture of the hardships endured by the Canadians. Every page of their annals is stained with a bloody legend of some fearful Indian massacre,—some sudden irruption of Huron or Iroquois, and devastation of happy and peaceful homesteads. We hear of the French garrisons of such posts as Niagara or Detroit, dying of the ravages of scurvy, being compelled to live for long months on salt provisions, and not daring to go far enough from the walls of their fortress to gather a few green herbs, for dread of the rifle and scalping knife of their unwearied assailants. Then as to the price of provisions,—of the common necessities of life, and the general condition of commerce, we find striking details in some recently published records of the period, drawn from the archives of Paris.

For example, it is stated that a barrel of wine bought in France for 50 livres, could not be delivered in Quebec at a cost of less than 277 *livres*! to which was to be added the Quebec trader's retail profit.* Insurance, which rose to 50 and 60 per cent, and freight from 450 to 1000 livres a ton, accounted for this exorbitant price. This item may be taken as a specimen of the prices paid by the Canadian settlers for European goods—even for the productions of their own Mother Country, which of course reached them free of duty. The Provincials along the British American sea-board were never placed under similar inconveniences, but on the contrary continued springing into commercial wealth and political importance at a rate rapidly outstripping the tortoise-like progress

* "L'Eau de Vie s'est vendue jusqu'à 200 livres la reite, ceque fait 25 livres la pinte. Un chapeau de laine, des plus communs, qui vaut quarante sols en France, s'est vendue quarante et cinquante francs, et les autres marchandizes en proportion.