

It is a far cry from the treaty of capitulation which was made on the Plains of Abraham in 1759 to the present year of grace, 1908, but it is remarkable how the stipulations of that treaty have influenced the course of Canadian history. Ramezay's demand that the French garrison should be permitted to march out of the city which he so honourably surrendered was significant of the resolute manner in which the French race has ever since insisted upon fair recognition in the administration of the country. A race who, in the hour of their direst adversity was able to snatch from the iron grasp of the conqueror the "honours of war" could not fail to be an important factor in the future history of any country. And then, whether we approve or disapprove of the religion they professed, a race who claimed as a condition of "laying down their arms" that they should be allowed the free exercise of their religious convictions is not a race likely to encourage anarchy or flout the authority of constitutional government. A race, too, that has preserved its individuality, its social habits and its language amid all the changes of the centuries has a steadying power, which in this democratic age of change and unrest must prove of incalculable value in promoting the stability of government and suppressing the vapid agitator and the turbulent demagogue. To quote Sir Charles Dilke in his recent book on the British Empire: "The French Canadians are now, under the admirable institutions which in our late born wisdom we have conferred upon them, perhaps the most loyal of all the peoples under the British Crown and they are so in spite of the fact that they have remained intensely French, proud of their race and its history and deeply attached to their tongue and its literature. . . . The double allegiance of the French Canadians of the present day on the one hand to the British Crown and to the liberty which they enjoy under it, and on the other hand not to a foreign power which they regard as foreign, but to their own race and literature, is one of the most interesting spectacles which the world affords."

With this race we have entered into partnership by treaty and by Acts of Parliament. In the long years of that partnership there have been differences of opinion, accentuated more than once by mutual recriminations, but in spite of the lapses of human nature, and it may be of hereditary antipathies, Canada is to-day stronger in her national cohesion and more inevitably committed to pursue her own distinctive destiny whatever it may be, than she would have been were it not for the partnership so happily formed one hundred and fifty years ago on the Plains of Abraham.