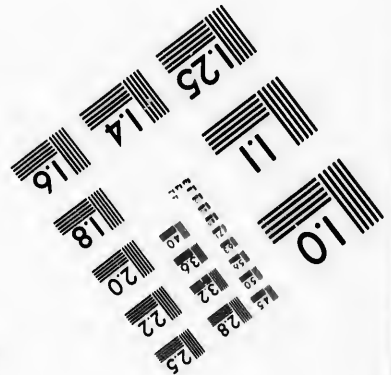
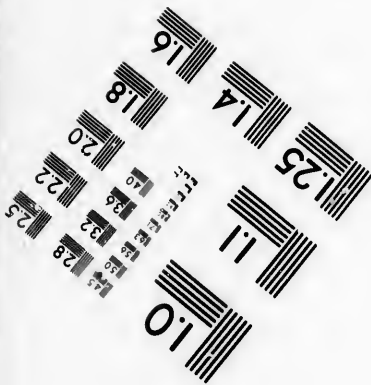
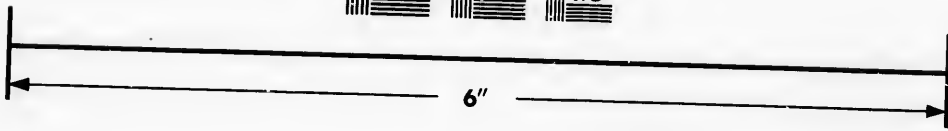
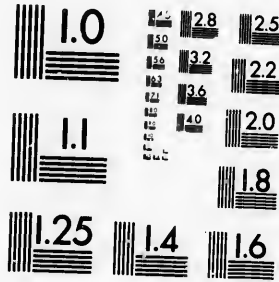


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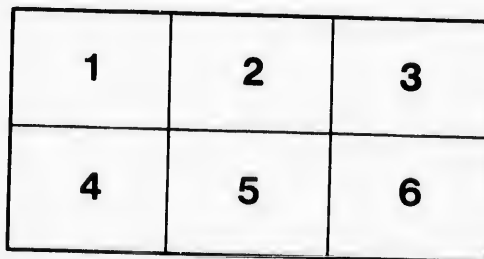
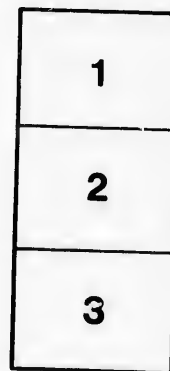
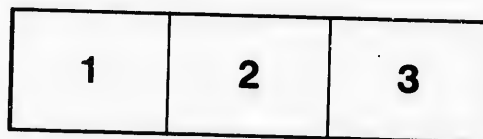
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*S. Gale*

AN

# ENQUIRY

INTO

THE EVILS OF GENERAL SUFFRAGE

AND FREQUENT ELECTIONS

IN

LOWER CANADA.

BY CAMILLUS.

*(Cms: John Henry)*

NON PUDEAT DICERE QUOD NON PUDEAT SENTIRE.

MONTREAL:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY NAHUM MOWER,  
At the Printing-Office of the CANADIAN COURANT,  
No. 38, ST. PAUL STREET.

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1810.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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*THE* writer of the following pages, is engaged in a work, of which they form an inconsiderable part. He submitted them to the inspection of a friend, who thought that the immediate publication of them might be useful. Whether this expectation will be realized is not for the writer to determine. Much of the value of publications on fugitive topics, depends on the state of the public mind:—they lose their value when the objects to which they refer cease to be interesting.—This is perhaps a sufficient apology for obtruding such a performance as the present before the public.—

The author is determined to remain in concealment. He has not indulged himself in any illiberal personality; and therefore incurs no responsibility to any person whatever. He does not court applause; and the “immunities of invisibility” secure him from censure. Humble as the pretensions of his work may be, there are many who would not admit them were his name in the title page; and not a few who might rate them beyond their



*merit. The author, not the work, would become the subject of criticism.—He has not like the French writer animated himself with the hope of pleasing all the world ; and being insensible to the approbation of a large portion of it, dismisses his opinions with “ frigid indifference.”*

“ In me omnis spes est mihi.”

Montreal, 20th April, 1810.

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## AN ENQUIRY, &c.

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LONG before the late unlawful and unprecedented attempt of the House of Assembly, to arrogate to itself powers with which the Constitution invested the higher branches of the Government, reflecting men foresaw, that certain needy and ambitious characters, would take some decided step, in order to prove to the Governor General, that, if he wished to conduct the administration in quiet, *they must be conciliated*.—This policy was recommended by precedent ; and its former success justified their expectations :—Besides, it was the only way in which persons of moderate abilities and popular character among the common people, could force themselves into places of trust and emolument, and make the Government contribute to their support.—Former Governors, had adopted a mode of drawing into the service of the State, or neutralizing persons of this description, which was highly unjust and impolitic :—Since to stop the mouth of one seditious man with a bribe, is the sure method to open a thousand still more clamorous and insatiable.—It discourages and disheartens the loyal and well disposed part of His Majesty's subjects ; and invites those who are the least qualified on every account to discharge any public trust, to attempt to overawe the Government, in order to obtain a share in its administration, or lay it under contribution.—The House of Assembly and a seditious news-paper, were the engines which were put in motion for those purposes ; in both of

which, opposition to the Government and laws, was carried on with such virulent contempt of decency and order, as to threaten most serious consequences to the Province, and bring the character of the administration into contempt in the eyes of the neighbouring States; whose Government was deeply interested in the progress which discontent and dissatisfaction were making.†—The demagogues in the House of Assembly, were sensible of the effect which would be made on the mind of the Governor by their opposition;—but more especially by the confidence with which that opposition would inspire the enemies of Great Britain.—In this, however, they consulted only the fears of the Governour; and were to a man disappointed in the result.—He could not have succumbed to such a cabal, without forgetting his own character and the duties of the high and responsible situation which he filled.

The opportunity and power which the democratic branch of the Government of Lower Canada gives to the worst men in society, to embarrass the administration, and put the happiness and tranquility of the State in jeopardy, is one of the many proofs I shall adduce, that the *Canadian proper* is not better fitted to enjoy a free Government, than he was at the time of the conquest.—Modern improvements have not reached him. He remains in most respects a living unchanged representation of the Norman peasant, in the reign of Louis XIV.—Nor are the lessons which he is daily receiving likely to alter his character for the better.—

Many things have conspired to keep the Canadian peasant almost as ignorant as his ancestor:—but the most powerful obstruction to improvement, has been the discouragement to FREE ENQUIRY, which

† The reason why I do not particularize measures and individuals, must be sufficiently evident.

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makes man both rational and active ; calls all his faculties into exertion ; and gives him a correct view of his moral, social and political relations ;—which softens and humanizes the ferocity of his nature and raises him to that dignity in the scale of thinking beings to which he was originally destined.—

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Much as I am an enemy to the wild and fanciful productions of human vanity which suppose man capable of self-government, and as sincerely as I contemn and deride those theories, which suppose that virtue is sufficiently attractive to draw him away from the influence of inordinate passions—I cannot on the other hand concur in opinion with those who despondingly believe that

“The world was made for *Caesar*.”

and that the multitude are only fit to be mere passive slaves ; who ought to be content if they be permitted to live without stripes and contumely.— This however was the state of the Canadian peasant before the conquest of Canada by Great Britain. The clergy directed his moral as the seigniors did his physical powers.—The *haute, moyenne et basse justice*, gave the Lord a right to hang, whip, or imprison his tenants, and extort from them the fruits of their labor ; and their redress by appeal to the Council at Quebec was little more than nominal.†— The church and state had a common interest ; and it produced just such a race of men as was congenial with the genius and policy of the government.— It made the people stupid, abject, submissive and indolent ; and the fear that they would assimilate to the English character, adopt his opinions, and in

\* “*Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes emollet mores ; nec sinit esse feros.*”

† Although Seigniors kept judges on their estates for these purposes, I consider the judicial power as virtually vested in themselves.

time cease to be Frenchmen; has kept them, and (unless the government interfere) will continue to keep them in the same state to which either the pride, national predilection, or worse motives of *men of influence* have hitherto confined them. Difference of manners, language, condition and Character, and even the most inflexible opposition to all modern improvements in the most common arts and employments, have been carefully cultivated and cherished, "*lest*," (as the leading men say) "*the Canadian [i. e. French] Character should be lost.*"—

I hope I shall not be charged with prejudice or contempt of "the Canadian Character," for having thus freely delivered my opinion. A simple description of men, manners or religion, is not a subject of prejudice or speculation;—the only question is, *whether it be fancy or fact.*—Men indeed may honestly differ about the deductions that are made from premises which all admit:—those which I draw, may be tested by experience, examples and common sense.—

As the universal usage of nations authorises a conqueror to introduce among the conquered such a code of criminal law as he may deem necessary to the safety of the state, Great-Britain gave to her newly acquired territory, the benefit of her own criminal law; whereby the Lords were stripped of their authority over their vassals; and both were made subject to the same rule. The policy in this case was similar to that formerly adopted in Great Britain; and the effect was the same.—The vindictive attribute of justice, was not less efficient though it was less invidious than formerly; and the concentration of authority, justice and punishment, in the sovereign power, produced among all classes of people, a salutary dependance on the government, and an emulation of loyalty and zeal, which perhaps con-

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tributed to preserve the Canadians from the mania which spread itself throughout the other parts of British America.

Statesmen and Generals are apt to ascribe to their own wisdom and address, those prosperous events which are often produced by causes and combinations beyond their agency and control; and with as little reason are charged with disasters, which no human skill or prudence could have averted. Lord Dorchester, who, during the war between the colonies and parent state was Governor of Canada, fancied that the loyalty of the Canadians, was owing to their docility and his own address; and thought that the obedience of the subjects could not be better rewarded and secured, than by freeing them from that very *dependence*, which was in fact one principal cause of their obedience. He therefore gave every possible aid to those who were desirous to change the form of the Colonial Government:— An act was accordingly passed in the 31st year of His Majesty's reign, by which one branch of the government of the colony, was placed completely in the hands of the people. It would seem to be the extreme of arrogance to accuse Lord Dorchester and His Majesty's Ministers with ignorance or negligence in the adoption of this measure; but when we consider that great men are apt to abstract and generalize without sufficient regard to particulars, it is not wonderful that they should sometimes fall into error. If His Lordship was really the author of this law, he must have had no other ideas of the analogy between the system of government and the necessities and state of the governed, than Procrustes of his iron bed, to whose dimensions the subject, whether long or short, was fitted. Without considering whether the children of the state were of *reasonable discretion*, he was determined to take them

out of their tutelage. He did not stop to enquire whether "*laws are necessary relations arising from the nature of things*;" but even seems to have adopted the converse of this hypothesis of the sage Montesquieu. As if it were possible to remove by legislative authority, those impediments to self-government which nature, habit, manners, and education had formed; or that an act of parliament when it gave an House of Assembly to Lower Canada could at the same time impart the only true principles of representation: namely-- sufficient property to constitute a deep interest on the part of the electors and elected in the preservation of the government and integrity of the state; sufficient knowledge to guard the multitude from deception; and sufficient virtue to bind them to their duty. Without these however, freedom (I mean *political freedom*) is little better than vice, folly, envy, jealousy and every great and every mean passion without tuition or restraint.

It was a maxim of the greatest man of modern times, that "Control ought to be strong in the direct ratio of passion as well as in the inverse of knowledge and reason." Without a controlling power, *sufficiently strong*, placed somewhere, society cannot exist in security and repose. Whoever denies this, is referred to the history of free governments, with whose ruins the map of time is strewn, and whose temporary splendor only serves to throw a feeble light on the crimes and misery they have produced. I shall perhaps be exultingly told that Great Britain alone furnishes sufficient evidence of the fallacy of this argument. I will not content myself with answering that a single exception only proves the general rule; because it is at least demonstrable, that the democratic ingredient does *not pre-dominate*, but *is subordinate* to the other parts of the

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composition of that Government. The last census of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland gives it a population of about sixteen millions, and subsequent authorities rate it at eighteen millions: Of these not more than five hundred thousand persons have any manner of connexion with the government,\* or any thing to do with the laws but obey them: and of the representatives of these five hundred thousand in the House of Commons, at least six tenths are under the *immediate influence* of the crown and of illustrious families. Of the remainder, a very considerable share is deeply interested in the safety, tranquility and glory of the nation; and bound by every motive which can regulate and govern men's actions, to unite with and support the executive branch of the government. This limited representation and controlling and all pervading influence of the higher classes of society, has been the subject of unremitted complaint and bitter invective among the demagogues of Great Britain from the unweildy Bedford, who (as Burke describes him) "*lay floating many a rood in the ocean of royal bounty,*" down to the lowest yelper for liberty in the train of Sir Francis Burdet. Had these state quacks succeeded in their endeavors to introduce a more general suffrage; had they been able to place the democratic branch as completely in the hands of the great mass of the population *as it is now in Canada*, Old England might now be sought for only amidst the *rubbish of revolution*; and the temple of British justice which rears her venerable dome amidst the wreck of surrounding states, subverted laws and millions of wretches, groaning beneath misery and op-

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\* Mr. BURKE rated them at only 400,000, before the union with Ireland.



pression, would long since have been demolished by some ambitious citizen, who like the reformers in France would begin by destroying the primary virtues: reverence to magistrates, obedience to parents, gratitude to benefactors, conjugal fidelity and parental tenderness; in order more effectually to introduce their philanthropic scheme of self-government. If I am correct in this statement; if the commons of Great Britain without the restraints I have described would be little better than a jacobin club, let me seriously enquire, what good we have to expect from the assembly of Lower Canada, which emanates directly from the whole indiscriminate mass of population? an assembly not as in England comprising the maximum of property, virtue, talents and valour of the state, but like the bar-room of a country inn or a common stage coach filled with gentlemen, notaries, attornies and attornies' clerks, country clowns, dram sellers and bankrupts—

*“Black devils and white, blue devils and grey,  
Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that mingle may.”*—

Men of candour and moderation may frown or smile at this picture; but I can at this moment select among the members returned and those who are candidates, persons enough to *complete the group*, of which by the by not one in five can give a good reason why he is a member of parliament. Far be it from me to reproach any man with the meanness of his occupation, or the narrowness of his capacity. None of us has the direction of his own education, or can select the profession most congenial to his ability; still less can we prescribe laws to nature, who distributes her gifts as she pleases.—But it is an inexcusable error to take upon ourselves an obligation which we are unable to discharge, or to sacrifice a positive good at the shrine of personal vanity.—

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To expect from a House of Assembly thus composed, union, wisdom and moderation, is to expect what neither experience or reason will warrant.— A spirit of innovation; a foolish desire to make the Government feel the power of the lowest branch of it; a profuse display of attachment to the crown and inflated zeal for liberty and freedom, and privilege, must be (as they have ever been) the distinguishing characteristics of such a body,—flowing from such a source; and accountable to such a tribunal as that of the Canadian public.

I have already shewn, that the Commons of England, qualified, limited and influenced as it is, has in fact very little analogy to that of Lower Canada. — In Canada the Executive Government has no influence in the Commons, and very little out of it. The PATRONAGE, limited and comparative-ly insignificant as it is, does not rest exclusively with the Kings representative. Many appointments to offices in Canada are made in England; and if made injudiciously,—without regard to individual merit and local circumstances, have a direct tendency to diminish the influence of the Governor; on whom every officer ought to feel his dependence, and with whom he ought to cooperate. It is in reality creating a kind of *Imperium in Imperio*, on the evil consequences of which it cannot be necessary to dilate.—Of the “*gens en place*,” as the demagogues call them, some are about to be disqualified and (since unfounded jealousies have been disseminated among the people) very few of the remainder can obtain a seat in Parliament.— If there be illustrious families, they have no power and scarce any influence. Of the former they were despoiled by the policy which at length introduced political equality into the whole mass of popula-

tion ; and the latter is so diminished, that during the late contested elections, the Seigniors could seldom prevail with their own tenants to vote for them !—

The tendency of these elections to level all distinction, has been abundantly proved by the late experiments.—The poor, ignorant, wooden shod peasant, who had always been accustomed to observe towards persons of rank, learning or fortune, that deference and respect, so necessary to the subordination which law, immemorial usage, and the common sense and feelings of mankind have established ; finds all at once, that he is himself the producing cause—the fountain of that honor and source of that distinction, for which he sees so many contending. The first use he makes of this power, is to humble those who by personal superiority or otherwise, may have excited his envy or hatred ; and this propensity so natural and therefore so general, is carefully excited by restless and turbulent individuals who are induced by ambition or cupidity to deceive and mislead him. Their political creed flatters his vanity and self-love ; and he is soon persuaded to regard every man above him as his natural enemy ; and the government itself as interested in oppressing him. He grows restless under authority ; discontented with his situation and rank as a member of the political body ; and distrustful of every thing which is not fitted to the standard of a moral imagination, poisoned by the flattery of knaves, and perverted by a daring philosophy which has worked such wonders in France, and with whose rudiments he is already acquainted. Thus far advanced in the doctrines of the *new school*, he refuses to vote for any man whose opinions are unlike his own ;—the consequence of which is, that the repre-

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entative must by degrees become analagous in all respects to the constituent : and in order to obtain a decided control over public opinion and become a *popular man*, he must have been guilty of so many mean concessions ; submitted to so many kinds of degradation, and run through such a series of dissimulation and dishonor, as to be totally disqualified to be a member of a wise and virtuous legislature.

“ ..... I will not do it,  
Lest I surcease to honor my own truth,  
And by my body's action, *teach my mind*  
*A most inherent baseness.*”

Let me now seriously ask, whether these are the sort of legislators from whose concurrent labors and speculations this rising colony is to expect great and liberal measures ; or the mother country hearty and efficient co-operation in defending the standard of morals and humanity ; in arresting the progress of degeneracy ; and diffusing lustre and happiness over the path of life ? No ; it is not in the nature and constitution of such persons to be emulous of each other in acts of loyalty and liberal policy.— Whatever good they have hitherto performed has been mean and dwarfish ; and even that has been extorted from them by the few enlightened and liberal men whom accident has occasionally placed among them ; the number of whom will soon be diminished by that spirit which is now so prevalent. Another election would complete the work. Indeed it would have been effected ere now, had the last election been postponed to a more distant period, so as to enable the democrats to circulate seditious papers in sufficient numbers, and to train, and discipline, and “ *instruct the common people.*” To hear one of those disorganizers speak on the subject of

the late dissolution of the Provincial Parliament, one would be apt to suppose, that all the clamour of contradiction and tumult of absurdity by which its proceedings were marked, is nothing more than the blunders of *honest ignorance*. Tell him of the turbulence, illegality and folly of his conduct; he puts his hand on his breast, and with ineffable humility and a most subdued tone of voice, he replies "*peut-être bien je me suis trompé.*" He has nothing but the love of his fellow creatures in his mind, and 'la douce humanité' in his mouth.\*

The men who meditated the massacres and confiscations in France, were in their outward behaviour the mildest, gentlest, tamest creatures in the world. "They could not (says an elegant writer†) bear the punishment of the mildest laws on the greatest criminals. The slightest severity of justice made the flesh creep. Had any one told the unfortunate noblemen and gentlemen, how and by whom the grand fabric of the monarchy under which they flourished would be subverted, they would not have pitied him as a visionary, but have turned from him as a "*mauvais plaisant.*" YET WE HAVE ALL SEEN WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

No opinion is more general than that the Canadians have heretofore been the most loyal and dutiful of all His Majesty's colonial subjects. This opinion seems to be derived from a comparison of their conduct with that of the English Colonies in their vicinity.—If men will look no farther than the surface of things, it is not very strange that they should fall into error and make general and un-

\* In the history of every people that I have met with, (said Baron George) I invariably find that the most unprincipled usurpers have always set out with professing to be the poor man's friend.

† Ed. Burke.

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Parliament, one qualified conclusions.—Let us examine the history of the colony from the conquest to the present time, and discover, if possible, what *motive or pretext*, by which its people here could have had to be hostile to the more than the British nation, when the rebellion broke out in of the turbu- America. Is that history in fact any thing but a t; he puts his record of the favours conferred on them by the humility and mother country; and the efforts of her ministers to es “*peut-être*” ameliorate the condition in which they found the but the love common people. They found them the slaves of a and ‘*la douce*’ multitude of masters; and made them the subjects of a free government; of laws whose rules applied cres and con- equally to the high and the low, the abject and ard behaviour in the world. august, the lord and the vassal. The ancient religion n the world. of the inhabitants, was not *merely tolerated*; it was (er) bear the the greatest cherished and invigorated by royal munificence. The the greatest justice made rigour of the feudal law was abolished; justice was unfortun- administered without partiality or delay; protec- ty whom the tion was gratuitously rendered; and agriculture, which they arts and industry encouraged by exemption from ould not have public burdens, and in many instances rewarded by turned from bounties. They could not, like the other colonies, VE HAVE ALL urge in their justification the loss of any privilege, at the Cana- civil or political; as their privileges had been duti- continually augmenting. They could not complain ay and duti- that they were taxed without their consent; since This opin- they were not taxed at all. They had always been erson of their accustomed to unmeasured, unconditional submis- sion to their superiors; while the other colonists, in ies in their conformity with the ancient usages of their native er than the country and ancestors, had always legislated for ge that they themselves. Their manners, habits, information, ral and un- prejudices, education, and motives of action, were met with, (said *essentially and radically different*. Of their loyalty, principled usur- (of which so much is said) during the war with the the poor man’s the other colonies, I should be glad to know where the

evidence of it is recorded.—In what great transaction shall we find that warlike spirit, resistless valour, and ardent attachment to the crown, which the upstart law-givers of the day, tell us is a sure pledge that a spirit of disaffection and revolt can find no place in a Canadian's bosom?—If there be such a monument erected to immortalize the Canadian name, I should be truly sorry to pass it unnoticed in this examination of their claim to the distinction they assume. Unfortunately the history of Montgomery, of Arnold, of Hazen and Livingston, is not out of print. I wish it were; and to prove the sincerity of that wish, I will (as the players say) "*let the curtain drop,*" at this scene of the political drama.

"Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars."

I am not the apologist of the Anglo-Americans, who threw off their allegiance; nor will I join in admiring the noble qualities of the people of Canada, because they did not turn round and bite the hand that broke their fetters, and by whose bounty they had been fed! Indeed, so little do I find to praise in the conduct of this colony, that during the last fifteen years of unexampled trial and peril, I cannot discover one act of high minded sympathy and generous attachment to Great Britain. While the noble Lion has watched in the portico of the Temple and guarded every avenue to it from the approach of the insidious Tyger; they have, cat like, lain in a corner, slumbering and purring on a velvet cushion, heedless of the toil and suffering and sacrifices and danger, to which their princely, generous protector was exposed!—Yet without a single motive to disaffection, and with every inducement of gratitude and interest, to sympathize and co-operate with the

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government; largely and deeply the debtor of the  
 another country, who had rescued them from the  
 darkness, barbarism and misery of their ancient  
 condition—we are called upon to do homage to their  
 fidelity, because they did not join in the revolt of  
 the other colonies, and reward kindness with per-  
 fidy.

It is so painful a thing to forebode evil, and un-  
 link the affections from those golden prospects which  
 constitute the *present happiness* of the far greater part  
 of mankind, that it is difficult to persuade many of  
 the *thinking* part of the people, that the political fe-  
 ver which now rages, is any thing more than a tem-  
 porary paroxysm; which will soon subside and leave  
 the political body in its former state of soundness  
 and sanity. They fancy that the seasonable inter-  
 position of the King's representative; the proofs he  
 has given that he will neither truckle to the insol-  
 ence of faction; nor compromise the just rights  
 and dignity of the higher branches of the govern-  
 ment, in order to conciliate the audacious and soothe  
 the licentious,—that these will restore and insure  
 tranquility for the future. The power and firmness  
 of the supreme authority may indeed restore a *tem-  
 porary tranquility*; but the malady will not be erad-  
 icated. Democracy is a permanent disease, which  
 strikes deep root in the corruption of our common  
 nature. Its passion is wild and inordinate. It de-  
 lights in difficulties and disdains every thing mode-  
 rate, solid and secure. Its nature is so anomalous,  
 that it thrives amidst difficulties; and is defeated  
 without feeling a sense of disgrace. It slumbers only  
 to recruit its strength and sharpen its appetite; and  
 returns upon its foe when least expected, with re-  
 doubled force and keener vengeance. France is its  
 common parent; supplies it with fresh vigor and



nutriment ; and watches it with unabated affection in every quarter of the civilized world. From that nation it "SPRUNG FORTH FULL ARMED," like Minerva from the head of Jove ; and like the goddess in some of her attributes, can travel unseen, assume every shape and speak every language suited to the various and ever varying taste of man. To the poor it promises plenty ; to the indolent ease ; to the licentious exemption from restraint ; to the ambitious glory ; to the philanthropist a return of the golden age ; and to every one happiness ! With the awful lessons we have had, it were idle to enquire whether it has kept any of its promises. There are however, still projectors and experimenters enough with their retorts and crucibles ready to decompose every venerable and useful institution ; in the hope of enriching themselves out of the dross and lumber of their great political laboratory. To talk of any *immediate danger* from democracy in Canada, would perhaps indicate an unjustifiable want of confidence in the power and wisdom of the British nation.-- The question is not whether she could annihilate the whole population of Canada, and run a ploughshare through the cities of Montreal and Quebec. No one indeed doubts her ability ; or ought to suppose that she has profited so little of the lessons she has had during the last thirty years as to temporize a moment with rebellion : but it is a most benevolent, important, and interesting enquiry, BY WHAT MEANS IT MAY IN FUTURE BE PREVENTED, WITH THE LEAST VIOLENCE AND INCONVENIENCE.

I have already endeavored to demonstrate from *reason and facts*, that the Canadian peasantry neither are, nor for many years can be, so generally instructed, as to have clear and distinct notions of a free government. The proportion of those who can read

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ated affection and write, to the whole population, with the exception of the two commercial towns, is not quite as one to five hundred; and of this small proportion, very few, except the notaries have much intercourse with the common people. The notary makes all their contracts, marriage settlements and wills; directs the distribution of property among successors; and performs almost every act which requires to be committed to writing. In the discharge of his professional duties, he obtains an ascendancy over the common people, which has almost superseded or suspended every other. There are few appointments; no places of profit or honor; no points of distinction at which men of this profession can arrive in the government. They reach the height of their consequence when they are commissioned by the governor; and would not be known beyond the precincts of their respective parishes, were it not for the facility which the house of assembly affords them, of uniting with others equally disaffected with themselves, and forming a party against the government.\* These are the "tribe of vulgar politicians who are (says Burke) "the lowest of our species.— There is no trade so vile and mechanical as government in their hands. Virtue is not their habit.— They are out of themselves in any course of conduct recommended only by conscience and glory. A large, liberal, and prospective view of the interests of states, passes with them for romance: and the principles that recommend it, for the wanderings of a disordered imagination. Littleness in object and in

\* I trust no man will consider me bound to enumerate all the exceptions to which this and all other GENERAL POSITIONS are liable. When I speak of any class of people, I only mean a large majority of them. I hope this explanation will silence the cavils of those who would find fault beyond the measure of transgression.

means to them appears soundness and sobriety. They think there is nothing worth pursuit but that which they can handle, which they can measure with a two foot rule, which they can count upon their fingers."

The principal end of the elective franchise in Lower Canada, is to give to *people of this class*, an opportunity to meddle in affairs of state : and if that privilege were removed entirely, these are the only persons who would lament it. Some of their constituents might sympathize with them for a week or a month : but it would not last longer. The mortification and disappointment of these *little great men*, would in reality benefit themselves and their families, by leaving them at home to mind their business, and enjoy *civil liberty*, while it would give repose to the people, and leave the government to the care of those who have no motive to abuse the trust : who have too much information to mistake their duty : and are too strongly bound by *character and property*, to neglect it through design. As to the common people, they are mere passive instruments in the hands of their leaders. This is evident to every man of observation and candour. The recent appeals which the governor has made to them, with so much reason and judgment ; with such an exposition of the causes that made those appeals necessary ; and such sincere and liberal assurances that his principal motive was their prosperity and the preservation of the just rights of the crown and government, from which their happiness and security are inseparable ; All prove that they are more corrupt than I will yet allow myself to suppose, or that those whose triumph depended on being able to deceive them, possess over them a most dangerous and permanent ascendancy ; and that in either case, *an House of As-*

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sembly proceeding from a suffrage so general and unqual-  
ified, is not suited to the state of society in Lower Canada,  
nor calculated to promote the dignity and security of the  
government, and individual happiness.

While I solemnly and deliberately record this opin-  
ion, I with equal sincerity protest against any infer-  
ence which uncandid men may draw from it, that I  
am an enemy to free governments in the abstract.  
Where knowledge is generally diffused throughout  
the whole body of electors ; and they are accus-  
tomed to discern with accuracy the bounds which reason  
and justice prescribe to the privileges of the different  
classes of people ; where property is not very une-  
qually distributed, and the situation of the country  
such as to be in little danger from foreign or domes-  
tic enemies ; a free government like that of Great  
Britain, would unquestionably produce the greatest  
possible degree of human happiness. But FREEDOM,  
however well men may suppose that they understand  
and appreciate its blessings ; however they may  
have accustomed themselves to associate with it eve-  
ry human good, is, (undefined and unadjusted to the  
subject to which it refers,) a word of more dupli-  
city of signification, than any in the English lan-  
guage. \* The crimes which have been committed  
in its name ; the madness and injustice of which it  
has been so prolific, ought to make reasonable crea-  
tures consider *political freedom* as a blessing only when  
it is restrained by positive rules, accompanied with  
a sufficient sanction, in such a manner as to be inca-  
pable of degenerating into licentiousness and produ-

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\* "If to break loose from the conduct of reason, (says Mr.  
Locke) and to want that restraint of examination and judgment  
which keeps us from chusing or doing, the worse be liberty,  
true liberty, madmen and fools are the only freemen."

cing worse evils than it was intended to prevent. Government is a matter of convenience and science, and so far from deriving its origin from a state of nature, in which all are free; is a system of benevolence suited to the necessities of the human race *in a state of society*; adjusting and securing to every member of that society, his *relative and distributive proportion of power and privilege*.

It cannot therefore comport with the true spirit of a just government, to give the meanest or lowest or most profligate of the people, a right or rather a privilege to meet the most respectable, learned and virtuous at elections, *on a footing of political equality*; and being the majority to send to an House of Assembly representatives to tax that property, or abridge those distinctions, which it is the chief end of government to protect, as the principal stimulant of human action as well as the means of human enjoyment.

*Property is the ruling principle of representation.* Yet so far is it from being represented in the parliament of Canada, that the candidate who *is not* supported by

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\* The restraint which grows out of an excess of freedom is very happily illustrated in the dialogue between Lucio and Claudio, in Shakespear's "*Measure for Measure*."

LUCIO.—Why how now, Claudio? Whence comes this restraint?

CLAUDIO.—From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty.

As surfeit is the father of much fast,  
So every scope, by the immoderate use,  
Turns to restraint.

† Whilst we admit that all men have an equal right to defend themselves, we must not mistake this for an assumption that *all men have equal things to defend*, or that liberty should consist in taxing the industrious and skillful who have acquired much, in order to enrich the lazy and profligate who may have acquired nothing, or who may have wasted all they could reach.

[FERG. POL. SCIENCE.]

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men of property at elections, is nine times in ten successful. The danger to which society is exposed from the prevalence of such a political evil, must be obvious to every man who will take the trouble to consider its tendency. "Property, (says Paley) is the sweetner of human toil; the substitute for coercion; the reconciler of labour with liberty. It is moreover the stimulant of enterprize in all projects and undertakings; as well as of diligence in the most beneficial arts and employments. Now did affluence when possessed contribute nothing to happiness, or nothing beyond the mere supply of necessaries; and the secret should come to be discovered, we might be in danger of losing great part of the uses which are at present derived to us through this important medium. Not only would the tranquility of life be put in peril, by the want of a motive to attach men to their private concerns; but the satisfaction which all men receive from success in their respective occupations (which collectively constitute the great mass of human comfort,) would be done away in its very principle."

If I have been so fortunate as to make myself understood in the analysis I have given of the political state of Lower Canada, in relation to the right of general suffrage, it must be evident to my reader, that the law establishing an House of Assembly requires amendment. The experiment was (after all the objections that have been urged against it) worthy of the most truly free, moral, and enlightened nation on earth. But time and opportunity, which detect all practical errors, have pointed out its defects, and suggest an immediate remedy. Those who are the greatest advocates of rational liberty; who best understand it; and are most deeply interested in the tranquility, prosperity and integrity of the colony, desire and expect this remedy. The whole English

part of the population ; the whole body of the clergy ; all the men of rank and property and respectability, both English and Canadian, desire a change *from principle* ; and a very great number of the common people, (*habitans*, as they are called) would be glad to be permitted to enjoy in peace and security, the fruits of their fields and the protection of the laws ; both of which are put in jeopardy by general suffrage, frequent elections, and the evils which they engender. The mode of effecting the change I shall now submit with all due deference to those who feel an interest in the subject. It is ; That an humble petition be presented to His Majesty's government, praying that the act of the 31st of His Majesty's reign may be altered in the following particulars. 1st. That instead of making any person eligible to sit in parliament, no person should be qualified to be a representative in the House of Assembly, who is not at the time of his election and for one year previous thereto, a proprietor of real estate, yielding a clear income of one hundred pounds sterling ; or possessed of two thousand pounds in personal property, over and above all debts, claims and demands of any nature whatsoever.

2d. That no person should be entitled to vote at an election for a member to serve in the House of Assembly, who during one whole year next preceding and at the time of the election, was not possessed of a clear income from real estate as proprietor thereof, of the yearly value of twenty pounds sterling—or a tenant paying one hundred dollars annual rent—or a possessor of a personal property to the amount of five hundred pounds sterling.

3. That the governor and council should be empowered to determine and declare by proclamation or otherwise, what number of representatives a county should be entitled to send to the House of Assem.

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ably, predicated on a calculation of the compound ratio of territory and population; and where any county is so large as to make it inconvenient for all the legal voters to assemble in one place, that the governor and council should have power as afore- said to divide such counties into two or more counties, as the case may be: and also to erect and establish new counties.

4. That every member of Parliament should be able to read and write in his vernacular tongue, and understand the English language well enough to translate it into his own language.

5. That English schools should be established in every parish throughout the colony, containing one hundred families.

6. That after the expiration of five years the English language only should be the language used in his Majesty's courts of justice, and in all legal proceedings except in such *extraordinary cases* where the judges of the said courts might see fit to allow a deviation from the general rule.

7. That after the expiration of seven years from the passing of the said law, the English language only should be the language used in parliament and in all parliamentary proceedings and records, and in all public offices and offices or places of record.

I am aware that these changes would meet with the most decided opposition from the demagogues who are interested in keeping the people ignorant and preventing all assimilation to the English character; which opposition however can be referred to no reasonable or justifiable motive; since if it be consistent with the true interests of the Canadians and English, that they should be *in reality as they are nominally, one people*; those who oppose their assimilation are enemies to both. They can only become one people by similarity of language, laws, education,



manners and habits. These constitute the mind and moral system of man ; and to its varieties may be ascribed the various characters of nations. I put religion out of the question ; because I do not consider it a subject of human legislation. Men are now either too liberal or too indifferent to the salvation of their neighbours, to propagate a favourite doctrine by violence, or murder one another for the love of Heaven. If the hermit Peter were to preach a crusade in these times, his hearers would be more apt to put a strait waistcoat on him than follow his standard to Palestine. I am not sure however, that the cold blooded ferocity of infidel philosophy, and political fanaticism, has changed men's hearts for the better since the fourteenth century. It is however very certain that *pious zeal*, if it exist at all, is in no danger of producing injury to the present generation. On the contrary, every well wisher to morals and human happiness, must lament its decline and the spirit which has succeeded it.

If the Canadians would seriously reflect on the benefits which would result to themselves from their entire incorporation into the English population, the candid and intelligent part of them would find stronger motives to become the advocates of the proposed alteration in the Constitution, than any Englishman can possibly feel. Why are they considered incompetent to fill all the highest offices under the government ? The disaffected will ascribe it to the partiality of the chief magistrate in favor of Englishmen. But is this not contradicted by other facts ? Has the chief magistrate any control over the means by which Englishmen enrich themselves and rise to distinction in the various departments of civil life ? Does he close up the avenues to success or celebrity in arts, in arms, in commerce ? To what cause shall we ascribe it that there is not in the whole Province a Ca-

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adian commercial house engaged in the import or  
 export trade ; not one Canadian who owns a ship or  
 even (as far as I have been able to discover) an inter-  
 est or share in a ship ? Why has mediocrity set  
 her seal on all their efforts and pursuits ? The answer  
 may be found in the policy of those who endeavour  
 to "*preserve the Canadian Character.*"—In the sys-  
 tem of the drivellers I have been describing.

It is in my opinion no small inducement to the  
 proposed changes, that they will in time do away all  
 those *invidious distinctions*, which now exist between  
 Canadian and Englishman. These distinctions must  
 exist however so long as there remain so many ob-  
 stacles to their speaking, feeling and acting alike.—  
 Monsr. Talleyrand, who is undoubtedly orthodox  
 authority, with many of our unpledged as well as  
 veteran statesmen in this colony, expresses him-  
 self on this subject with his usual acumen and in-  
 genuity.—"*An insurmountable barrier* (says he)  
 is raised up between people of a different language,  
 who cannot utter a word without recollecting that  
 they do not belong to the same country ; between  
 whom every transmission of thought is an irksome  
 labour, and not an enjoyment ; who never come to  
 understand each other thoroughly ; and with whom  
 the result of conversation after the fatigue of una-  
 vailing efforts, is to find themselves mutually ridicu-  
 lous. *Difference of manners, language and character,*  
*oppose insuperable barriers to their union with and incor-*  
*poration into the same people."* In proof of this hy-  
 pothesis, Tallyrand cites the present state of the peo-  
 ple of Canada, whom he considers "as completely  
 and entirely Frenchmen as they were in the year  
 1760." If what he says be true in the abstract, how  
 peculiarly applicable is it to a Frenchman, whose  
 national vanity never forsakes him ; whose pride is  
 elated by every event which imparts splendour to the

French name; and who feels his distributive share of that splendour, thrilling through every nerve, dilating every muscle, and identifying him with the performers in the great drama, which is acting on the theatre of Europe! I do not say that the "loyal Canadians" felt any such emotions at the news of the affair at Austerlitz, at Jena, at Wagram, and the series of victories which Buonaparte has obtained. On the contrary, I sincerely believe that many, very many of them, have mourned at the success of a monster, who has spread rapine, violence and misery far and wide. The baleful effects of these events have been as correctly estimated by the friends of religion, morals and humanity in Canada as in any part of the world. Yet since such things were permitted by Providence; and the mind abstracted to the mere struggle for superiority from all its evil consequences, it was not easy for the best of them to avoid reflecting with complacency, that Frenchmen triumphed! Time and a gradual incorporation of the Canadian into the English character can alone do away these impressions. It is idle to think of making Canada always an useful appendage of the British empire on any other plan.\* The intrigues of foreign states, joined to the indefatigable labours of domestic traitors, will in time produce wonders, unless they be counteracted by *efficient and radical meas.*

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\* The importance of Canada to Great Britain is a matter the discussion of which I reserve to a future occasion. My present purpose being merely to rouse those who are deeply interested in the integrity, peace and prosperity of the colony, to a sense of their duty and the danger which threatens them. When evil is foreseen, it is more easily prevented. We ought not to disregard the opposition of disaffected men merely because they do not begin with open rebellion. "No man, (says Paulus Æmiliius) ever begun his attempt against government with an enormous crime; and relaxing in the *smallest matters* breaks down the fences of the greatest."

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Politics, (says Montesquieu) is like a smooth file, which cuts slowly and attains its end by gradual and tedious progression.

But what reason have we to expect that amidst the variety and importance of great national concerns in which his Majesty's ministers are engaged, they can bestow that attention upon a distant colony, which would enable them to take an accurate view of its true situation; to examine the mechanism of its institutions; and repair such part of it as might be out of order or disproportioned to the remainder? The frequent changes of ministry; the fluctuation of political parties, and the objects of personal gratification, which are at once the cause and effect of frequent mutations in the executive branch of the imperial government, prevent the secretary for the colonial department, from bestowing that continuity of thought and investigation necessary to provide an effectual remedy. Besides it may with great reason be supposed that if a material alteration in the constitution of the colony had been found necessary, the individuals who are more immediately interested, would take upon themselves the trouble of arranging all the preliminary detail; make a formal representation of their wants; and pursue such a course as would leave his Majesty's government little more than the ratification of the law. The path of duty indeed is plain enough; but it unfortunately happens in most countries with whose history I am acquainted, that political evils have been permitted to strike such deep root, that their removal was always attended with much pain and some danger. The men of property and consequence are, says Walpole, "like sheep. They lie quietly to have their fleeces taken off." He might have added that they seldom bleat until the knife is at their throat when their dis-

gress through their own folly becomes a subject of ridicule rather than sympathy.

“ Pleased to the last, they crop the flow’ry food,  
“ And kiss the hand just raised to shed their blood.”

Content with their present prosperous condition they are more careful to enjoy than perpetuate it, and confine their views to the narrow circle of a month or a year instead of securing to posterity those blessings of which they so largely partake. A visionary hope that reason will some time preside and the multitude obey her mandates, leads them to the brink of the precipice before they open their eyes to the danger towards which they were from the beginning of their journey proceeding. They occasionally feel solicitude, but it evaporates in fruitless wishes and idle anticipation. They call upon Hercules before they put a finger to the wheel; and foolishly build their hopes upon some miraculous interposition which like the horizon always flies as they pursue it.—This is the portrait which history and experience draws of people who have most at stake in society, and are most deeply interested in its prosperity and preservation.—Livy, Tacitus, Gibbon and the history of our own times abound with instances. The supine will forget these truths; the timid will not dare to act upon them; the prudent have some fault to find with the mode of obtaining redress; men of high spirit will smile at my forebodings; and all will tacitly agree to do nothing at the very moment when inaction is the worst and most dangerous of possible things.—These are my fears; but contrary to my expectation should any thing I have written excite them to confederate and do their duty, I shall enjoy a secret satisfaction in having contributed even *this trifle* to the stock of public happiness.

CAMILLUS.

