CHAPTER X.

CANADA IN 1865.

THE purport of my mission to Canada and the other British provinces was to study the state of public opinion, and to send home reports of it, with respect to the question, then but newly mooted, of the union or confederation of those noble Colonies in connection with the British Crown. The question was not new to me, inasmuch as I had publicly advocated such union four years previously in the *London Review*, as well as more recently in my letters to the *Times*. My sentiments were known to the leading men in Canada, to whom I was, in other respects, a *persona grata*, which I certainly had not been in the Northern States of the American Union.

It had fortunately been in my power, in 1858, on my return to London after my first visit to America—when I found my old friend, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, in the position of Colonial Secre-

tary, in the administration of Lord Derby—to be of service to high Canadian officials in their visits to the mother country. Previous to that year, the Colonial Office—whether the Colonial Secretaries were Liberal or Conservative—was so tightly swaddled in the bonds of red-tape, of adamantine hardness and tenacity—though it was only *tape* after all—treated all emissaries from the Colonies with but scant or no courtesy; took an unconscionable time in answering the letters and memorials addressed to it, answering—if it answered at all—in the driest and curtest official manner; and never showed the slightest social attention to the Colonial functionaries, however eminent they might be.

These gentlemen, even if they wanted so small a favour as an admission to the House of Commons during any debate in which they were interested, were compelled, in default of other means, to cultivate the acquaintance and good offices of the American Ambassador, who was always ready and willing to oblige and make himself agreeable and useful. These facts were explained to me during my first visit to Canada, in the spring of 1858, by my excellent friend, the Hon. John Young, of Montreal, at whose beautiful residence at Rose Mount I was a guest for three weeks.

Mr. Young had held the position of Minister of Public Works in the Canadian Government,

and was the originator of the project—afterwards happily completed—of building the noble Victoria Bridge over the St. Lawrence, at that place two miles in width. The bridge is universally admitted to be the finest and most gigantic bridge in the world. Nor was this the only great engineering enterprise for which Canada is indebted to the foresight and sagacity of Mr. Young.

This gentleman, on his visits to London, was all but ignored by the Colonial Office, and treated with no more consideration than if he had been an ordinary clerk in a mercantile establishment. Far different, Mr. Young told me, had been his treatment in Paris, where M. Drouyn de l'Huys, the Foreign Minister of Napoleon III., had received him with marked attention, without other introduction than his card, and the statement that he was a member of the Canadian Government. M. Drouyn de l'Huys not only answered his letters without more than a day's delay—whereas the English Colonial Office took three or four weeks in the operation—but invited the eminent Canadian to his receptions and to his table, and introduced him to the Emperor and Empress.

Sir Edward Lytton, not then advanced to the peerage, sent for me to consult with me on matters relative to the Red River Settlement, now the Colony of Manitoba; and I took advantage of the opportunity to inform him of the

grievance alleged against the Colonial Office by my friend Mr. Young, and other high Canadian officials, taking the liberty to tell him that, in my opinion, it was not only ungracious but unwise to compel influential colonists who visited London to be indebted solely to the American Minister for any social courtesies extended to them; and that it might be worth his while to inaugurate a new and better system. He took the hint, and acted upon it at the first opportunity which offered. When, a few months afterwards, an important Canadian deputation arrived in London, Sir Edward invited all the members to visit him at Knebworth, and also sent me an invitation to meet them. Since that time neither Canadian, Australian, or any other colonial deputations or functionaries visiting London have had occasion to resort to American ambassadors for aid or courtesy, but have been properly received and attended to by all the Colonial Ministers who have succeeded Sir Edward Lytton. These facts, and my agency in producing them, were known in Canada when I arrived there in the Summer of 1865, and helped to secure me a favourable reception from many old friends and many more new ones.

I visited Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec in Canada, Halifax in Nova Scotia, St. John's and Frederickton in New Brunswick, and Charlotteville in Prince Edward Island, and found in all these

places a strong, though not unanimous, feeling in favour of confederation, which I did my best to confirm and strengthen by the letters which I wrote home to the *Times*. There was at this period a strong desire on the part of the Duke of Newcastle, the Colonial Secretary, to colonise the Red River Settlements in the Far West, in the rich agricultural district then but sparsely populated and very little known, and which had received from travellers and surveyors appointed by the Canadian Government the name of "The Fertile Belt." The Duke of Newcastle wished to make a Crown Colony of it, but was at a loss to fix some designation upon it more appropriate and more euphonious than that of Red River or Saskatchewan which some proposed to give it. I suggested to a well-known English Member of Parliament in the confidence of the Duke, then travelling in Canada, that the admirable name of Australia, signifying the country of the South, might afford a hint for designating the country of the West, and that it might appropriately, though perhaps a little too poetically, be called "Hesperia." The Duke was pleased with the idea, and took time to consider it, and expressed a desire that I should be made the first Governor of it, if I would accept the position. I felt highly honoured, and even elated at the flattering proposition, which I certainly should have accepted had it been formally made to me; but the Duke of New-

castle ceased to be a Minister, or to have a voice in the matter, before the project reached maturity, and, like Sancho Panza's governorship of Barataria, my governorship of Hesperia remained an idle dream. The new Colony, shortly afterwards established, did not receive the name I had proposed for it, but became known to the world as Manitoba, so called from a large and beautiful lake of fresh water in the midst of it.

My genial Irish friend, Mr. Thomas D'Arcy McGhee, then Minister of Agriculture in the Canadian Government, expressed much regret that my chance — a very slender and shadowy one at the best — of the governorship of a Crown colony had vanished into nothingness; and, with the impulsiveness of a generous and poetic nature, appeared to be more disappointed than I was at my failure to be rewarded with an office for which, however, he well knew that I had never been a candidate. Mr. McGhee, for whom I had a great personal esteem, as well as a literary admiration, had, seven years previously to this time, expressed publicly against me a certain amount of literary hostility in Montreal and other cities in Canada, at which, however, I was not offended, although I judged that his former friendship for me had cooled down or been extinguished altogether. But I was wholly wrong in the supposition. Mr. McGhee, fearing that he might

have been too hard upon me, travelled from Montreal to Niagara Falls, for the sole purpose of renewing his acquaintance with me, and of explaining his reasons for the not very violent hostility which he had exhibited against me in a lecturing tour which he had made through the cities of Canada. When in Montreal, in the spring of 1858, I delivered three lectures on "Poetry and Song" to large and enthusiastic audiences, in one of which I took occasion to compare the genius of Thomas Moore, the Irish lyrist, unfavourably with that of Robert Burns, stating that Moore was polished, artificial, and aristocratic; Burns simple, natural, and democratic; that the one was like a tame canary that would only sing when he was perched on the finger of a countess, but that the other sang like a morning lark in the clear blue sky or on the fringe of a summer cloud, far above its lowly nest —true, as Wordsworth beautifully said, to "the kindred points of heaven and home." Mr. McGhee reminded me of this, and informed me, that being at the time a candidate for the representation of the city of Montreal in the Canadian Parliament, and mainly dependent on the Irish vote for his election, he made my disparagement of Moore and my exaltation of Burns a net to catch Irish votes; that he had with that end in view composed and delivered lectures in Montreal, just prior to the election, in which he controverted my opinions,

glorifying the Irish bard at the expense of the Scotch one, and gaining thereby the applause and support of his countrymen. "In fact," he said, with a grasp of my hand and a face beaming with good humour, "I owe my election and my present position as a Canadian Minister mainly to you, and the dexterous and profitable use I made of your lecture. In a literary point of view I think you were right, and that Burns' songs of 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'A Man's a Man for a' that' are far better than any songs that Moore ever wrote; but if all's fair in love and war, I think that such an amount of literary unfairness as I displayed against you in the matter of Burns and Moore was fair political warfare, and that you ought not to take offence at it." I assured him I had taken no offence whatever; that I was, on the contrary, highly amused, and at the same time gratified to learn from his own lips that I still enjoyed his friendship.

Mr. McGhee had distinguished himself during the last few years of Daniel O'Connell's waning influence in Ireland by his opposition to what he considered the faint-hearted policy of that once formidable agitator, and had joined the more ardent spirits of the Young Ireland Party of 1848. In that capacity he had come into unpleasant contact with the law, and to escape the consequences he fled to New York, in search of the liberty which he

had imagined was not to be found in his own country. But he speedily discovered that the sort of liberty enjoyed in New York, controlled as it was by the mob of his countrymen in that sorely misgoverned city, was not to his mind, and, after a comparatively short endurance of it, he renounced his allegiance to the Government of the United States and returned to his youthful but interrupted allegiance to the British Government, and took refuge in Canada. Among the loyal Canadians he soon succeeded in making his mark, became a prominent supporter of the British connection —which only a few Irishmen in Canada presumed to disparage or dispute—a prominent member of the Legislature, and ultimately Minister of Agriculture in the administration of Mr. John A. MacDonald, since rewarded by a baronetcy. Fenianism never took vigorous root in Canada, though it was not wholly unknown; and a crazy Fenian in Ottawa, the legislative capital of Canada, who had taken personal or political offence, perhaps both, at poor D'Arcy McGhee, lay in wait for the minister, the statesman, the eloquent orator and eminent man of letters, and shot him through the head as he was opening with a latch-key the street-door of his residence late at night in that city. The unfortunate man lived but for a few minutes after the dastardly blow was struck at him, and died universally lamented in Canada. The assassin, who turned

out to be a drunken journeyman tailor, maddened by bad whisky and worse politics, was speedily arrested, tried, and hanged. In D'Arcy McGhee the British Crown as well as Canada lost a faithful servant, and the legislature and society a shining ornament.

Fenianism, as I have already observed, did not flourish in Canada ; neither does it flourish greatly anywhere in America except in the cities of New York and Chicago. When in Nova Scotia, I made the welcome acquaintance of Dr. Conolly, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Halifax, a true prince of the Church, though not a Cardinal as he might and should have been. The Archbishop exercised a hospitality deserving to be called princely, in the pleasant city where he resided. He was a favourite among all classes, whether they were of his faith or not, and took pleasure in asserting that not a single Fenian was to be found in the whole province of Nova Scotia, and would not be as long as he retained any influence over his fellow-countrymen. His boast was not unjustified and if any Fenians existed in Nova Scotia, they carefully concealed their Fenianism, never betrayed themselves at public meetings, or in the columns of the newspapers, or publicly subscribed a dollar to the Fenian funds of their New York fellow-countrymen. The Archbishop was a man of the most genial temperament, and had all the ready and buoyant wit of the best classes of

Irishmen, whether they be rich or poor. He did not disdain to sing "The Widow McCree" after dinner when in the company of a few select friends, amongst whom he did me the honour to include myself during my stay in Halifax. At his great dinner parties, of which he gave several during the year, it was noticed that he always invited five or six of the stupidest but richest men in Halifax. The fact being pointed out to him by a friend, whose intimacy with him was so great as to encourage if not to warrant the liberty, the good-natured Archbishop replied, "Yes, I know they are fools; but I like such fools as they are, and not only like but respect them. Whenever I want money for the cathedral, for the schools, for the poor, or for any urgent case of distress, I know where to get it at a day's notice. These fools, as you call them, have deep purses, and are always ready to empty them at my request, making no scruples at the demand. I wish there were a greater number of such fools in Halifax, and I should be glad to make their acquaintance."

When, two or three years after I had made his acquaintance in Halifax, the Archbishop visited London, I recommended to the Committee of the Reform Club that they should elect so distinguished a stranger to the privilege of honorary membership for a month, which they had it in their power to confer upon eminent foreigners, and which, at my

request, they had previously conferred upon Mr. Seward and on two other noted Americans. The Committee decided that they had no power, that the Archbishop was not a foreigner, but a British subject, and therefore ineligible under the rule by which they were bound to act, expressing their deep regret at the inability to do legally that which it would have given them under other circumstances the greatest pleasure to have done. On reporting the unexpected decision to Dr. Conolly, he said, with a merry twinkle of his eyes, "Am I expected to qualify for admission to the Club by an act of successful rebellion against my Sovereign, as was the case of General Washington, and so constitute myself a foreigner? No, I thank you! I will not do it—not if you would make me a present of the Club-building and all its contents, including the bodies and souls of the members."

The result of this refusal was that at the next annual meeting of the Club I brought forward a resolution to the effect that the privilege of honorary membership should for the future be extended to distinguished *colonists*, as well as to distinguished foreigners. The resolution, though not carried quite unanimously, as most of the members wished it to have been, met with only three dissentients, who, strange to say, were colonists themselves!

IN FRENCH CANADA.—A VISIT TO "JEAN BAPTISTE."

WHILE sojourning in Montreal, the real though not the nominal capital of Canada, and admiring—as every stranger fresh from the United States does—the beauty of its situation, the massiveness of its grey stone buildings, and its peculiarly French character, I expressed a wish to know something more of the life and character of the habitans, or descendants of the original French settlers of the days before Wolfe and Montcalm, than could be obtained in the great towns and cities.

The person to whom I addressed myself was Mr.—afterwards Sir—Etienne Cartier, a noted French Canadian, a member of the Legislature and the Government; and, though once in his hot youth, when William IV. was King, a rebel against British authority, one who, like many others of his countrymen, had ripened and mellowed into a satisfied, loyal, and honoured servant of the Crown.

"If you desire," he replied, "to see Jean Baptiste at home" ("Jean Baptiste" means a French Canadian, as "John Bull" means an Englishman), "you should visit some of the long

villages in the neighbourhood of Quebec; or, better still, you should take the steamer for Three Rivers, and thence proceed inland and explore the villages that lie between the St. Lawrence and the St. Maurice. The *habitans*, as the natives are universally called, are not modern Frenchmen, but Frenchmen of the *ancien régime*, such as the French of the old country were in the days of Louis Quinze, before the deluge of the great revolution had swept away the old ideas, the old prejudices, the old manners, and the old courtesies. There is no people like us left in the world—so simple-hearted, so little idolatrous of money, so unenterprising, so contented with mere life for its own sake, so honest, so devout, so obedient, and, I may add, so lazy and stagnant."

Similar information was given me by a stately French Canadienne, a lady of the very old *régime*, with manners that would have graced the Court of the Grand Monarque. She had great contempt for modern ideas, and expressed her firm belief that "gentlemen were fast becoming extinct." As for the *habitans*, she declared, they had become vulgarised and contaminated by their association with newly-arrived immigrants, and, worst of all, with the "Bostonais," as she called all Americans from every part of the United States, who were, she said, a people without manners or education, and who, when they looked at anybody, said with their eyes,

if not with their tongues, "Who cares for you? Am I not as good as you, and a great deal better?"

"Forty years ago," she added, "things were very different in Canada. The poorest *habitant* was in his heart a gentleman, and knew how to yield graceful, and not servile, deference to his superiors. He treated a lady as if she were a lady, and not as the Bostonians do—as if she were a silly creature, pleased to be taken notice of, as a dog might be. When the *habitant* paid his rent to his feudal superior, he dressed himself in his best, and came neat and clean into the presence of his landlord or landlady, and discoursed of the weather and the crops, or the news of the village, telling who was married and who was dead since his last visit, and doing his best to make himself agreeable. Now he comes in his working-clothes, muddy and dirty, and smells of the farm-yard and the stable, with grimy hands, sits down without being asked, answers in monosyllables, as if he had a grievance and was too surly to tell it, and altogether behaves more like a Bostonais than a Canadian. However, all are not equally bad. The Church still exercises its ancient influence over the people; and the women are the best, the purest, and the most modest in America."

All things considered, this lady was of opinion that I would not regret a visit to the villages of the interior, "where, thank God!" she said, "the

people are not quite so Bostonised (*Bostonisé*) as they are in Montreal."

Between Montreal and Three Rivers, half-way to Quebec, the St. Lawrence offers nothing remarkable in the way of scenery, or anything of interest to the traveller, unless it be the wide expansion of its bed, which is known by the name of Lake St. Peter, and through which, at great cost, a channel has been dredged sufficiently deep to admit the passage of ocean-going steamers. This work, in its first inception, was ridiculed and denounced as the impracticable idea of a romantic enthusiast; but the Hon. John Young persisted in considering it not only practicable, but, considering the advantages it would bestow upon the city of Montreal, a very economic and profitable investment of the public money. He was neither to be turned from his purpose by sneers or delays, and lived to see his design carried out amid the applause and, it may be added, the barren gratitude of the whole community.

The steamer that left Montreal at four in the afternoon reached the town of Three Rivers before midnight, and landed its passengers at the great hotel of the place, which overlooks the long reaches of the swiftly-flowing river. "Three Rivers" takes its name from the fact that two branches of the St. Maurice, that rises six hundred miles away in the pine wildernesses of the Hudson's Bay Company's territory, here unite with the St. Lawrence.

The town, which next to Quebec is the oldest in Canada, contained, when I visited it, a population of about seven thousand. It is one of the trading stations of the Hudson's Bay Company; but its chief business is the receipt and despatch of timber floated down the long succession of the falls and rapids of the St. Maurice on its way to Quebec. For a person with a small income, with no means of increasing it, and who would be content with fishing and shooting for amusement, and with such dull society as a little town affords, Three Rivers may be recommended as a desirable place of residence. Fine fat fowls are or were to be bought in the market for two shillings a pair, the shilling representing only tenpence sterling; beef at fourpence per pound; mutton at two shillings and sixpence per quarter; and all other articles of first quality at rates equally moderate. The neighbouring country is fertile and easily cultivated. Game and fish are abundant, and there are no restrictions upon the gun and the rod to interfere either with the sport or the appetite of him who uses them.

The town shortly before my visit had sustained a serious loss in the death of its most enterprising inhabitant, Mr. Turcotte, its representative in the Canadian Parliament. Owing to this gentleman's energy, railroad communication had been opened up from the village of St. Gregoire, on the opposite bank of the St. Lawrence, with the Grand Trunk

Railway at Arthabaska, a distance of thirty miles to the southward. He had also planned a railway from Three Rivers northward to Shawinegan, a distance of about twenty miles, and had built a monster hotel, on the American system, overlooking the Upper Falls. But the railway was uncommenced, the hotel was unfinished, and those who wished to feast their eyes on the glories of Shawinegan had to hire a vehicle, and take their provisions, edible and potable, along with them, as there was nothing to be had on the way but such as small country cabarets or estaminets could afford. On these points, however, there was no difficulty. Our party of five, two ladies and three gentlemen, were accommodated with a roomy vehicle—place for one on the box—with two strong, though gaunt, ungainly steeds, and a careful driver, who kept up a constant talk to his horses in French, and knew no word of English except the profane one that Béranger misspells in his once famous song:

"Quoique leurs chapeaux soient bient laids,
Goddam! moi, j'aime les Anglais."

Our host of the hotel provided us with all the creature comforts that hunger or thirst—or luxury even—could desire; and at seven o'clock on a fine summer morning we started to explore the villages of the habitans and to picnic at Shawinegan. The first village on the road was that of "Des Forges," where Mr. McDougall, a Highlander by birth or

descent, had established a foundry that gave employment to a considerable number of people. In this part of the country the iron ore lies thickly strewn over the surface, but had never been turned to account by the *habitans* until Mr. McDougall established himself among them. "Jean Baptiste," however, is not slow to follow if you show him the way ; and the *habitans*, enlightened as to the value of the ore which they find on their farms, had nothing to do but to cart it to Des Forges and receive payment. Mr. McDougall made from ninety to one hundred tons of iron per week, and found a ready purchaser in the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada.

The next place, six miles further on, is St. Etienne, the very type and model of a French Canadian village, a description of which may serve for a description of the hundreds that line the banks of the St. Lawrence, the Richelieu, the St. Jean, the St. Maurice, and other rivers. Nothing more unlike an English village can be imagined. There is no village-green or common, with its sheltering elms, the play-ground of the young villagers, or the browsing-place of the donkeys or the geese, if browsing (which I do not assert) be the proper word to apply to the grass-eating of those noblest of birds (for the dinner-table). There is a village church, generally a substantial edifice, with a tin roof and steeple, that shine and shimmer in the bright sun as if they were of silver ; but which

are not visible to the whole people at once, like the spires or towers of an English hamlet, inasmuch as a village is generally six or seven miles long, and not a cluster of houses around some common centre as with us at home. No one house in a French Canadian village is much better than another, unless it be the cabaret or the post-office. No "squire" with a pretentious mansion overshadows his tenantry; and even the doctor or the local lawyer is not better lodged than his neighbours, if, indeed, there be a lawyer to be found at all. The reason of the extreme length of the villages is, that everybody must have a frontage, and that the "terres," as the farms or lots are called, are laid out either upon the banks of a river, extending backwards, or upon a high road. The frontage varies from two to four arpens, or from four hundred to eight hundred feet, and each terre has a depth of about a mile. The house invariably stands by the road or the river, and is generally constructed of rude logs of wood, the interstices being filled with mud or clay to keep out the wind and rain; and the whole scrupulously whitewashed both outside and in. Adjoining each house, and open to the road, is an oven, in which, in summer-time, the good wife boils her broth, cooks her meat, roasts her potatoes, or makes her tea and coffee, in the presence of the public, as it were, if there were

any public which cared to inspect her culinary arrangements.

Among these simple people, as in France, the terre, or farm, on the death of the proprietor, is usually divided among the children; and, as each insists upon having a frontage, the farms still retain their depth, but are diminished in width in proportion to the number of heirs. Thus a terre of four arpens, when divided among four children of a deceased *habitant*, is still a mile long, but is narrowed for each proprietor to the width of two hundred feet. This ribbon-like piece of land is liable to still further subdivision, so that it is possible, unless a purchase, a marriage, or an inheritance should prevent and lead to the re-conjunction of any of these dissevered slips, that a man might inherit a farm which he could walk across in two minutes, but could not walk along in less than half an hour. The style of farming is rude and primitive: it is an accusation brought against the *habitans*, that they farm no better than their progenitors in the days of Henri IV.; that they know nothing of improvements in agricultural implements, or of the rotation of crops; and that they are fast exhausting the land. They remain on the old farm from generation to generation, as fixed to the soil as if they were serfs, and as averse from change of domicile as the limpet upon the rock. There is abundance of good land in the wilderness to be

had for almost nominal prices — land which the English and the Irish are glad to purchase and reclaim, but which has no attraction for Jean Baptiste. He does not object to fell trees, or do the hardest work of the wilderness, for wages; but he seems to have no inclination to do such work on his own account, or act in any way as a pioneer of civilisation, like the hardy Yankees, Englishmen, and Irishmen, who are every year adding new States to the already large dominion of the Union, and connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific by a continuous line of thriving and energetic communities. He seems to think that his lot has been cast in a pleasant place in the Canada of his great-grandfathers, and loves the old terre as if the memories of a thousand years were clustered around it. He lives far better than his compeers in France, who are contented with black bread, an onion, and a pint of "vin bleu" for their ordinary diet, except on grand occasions; and scarcely ever dream of such a luxury as the "poule au pot," which good Henri Quatre desired to see in the cottage of every one of his subjects. The Canadian *habitant* has more abundant fare. In travelling along these lengthened villages, the grunt of the porker, the cackle of the hen, the crowing of the cock, and the gobble of the duck are to be heard on every side; and fair average crops of maize, oats, rye, buckwheat, flax, lint, and

tobacco, somewhat later in coming to maturity than similar crops in New England and New York, are to be seen at every interval between the cottages. Pork and poultry are the staple food of Jean Baptiste, but mutton and beef are by no means unknown. The sheep browse in the fields behind the farm, and his wool is in request, not so much for the purposes of commerce, as for the supply of the needs of the household; for, in the cold winter days and the long winter nights, Madame Jean Baptiste, like Penelope and her daughters in the olden time, card and spin, and weave the wool into warm and serviceable cloth, fit for the whole attire of the fathers and sons, and for the petticoats and cloaks of mothers and daughters. The *habitant* does almost everything for himself; makes and mends his clothes and shoes at home, weaves his own straw hat, extracts sugar from the sap of the abundant maple-trees that thrive so luxuriantly all over the country, dries and cures his own tobacco, distils his own execrable whisky (beer and wine he scarcely ever sees), makes his own soap, and, where there is much timber on the "terre," which is not available as lumber or for commercial purposes, burns down the trees and boils their ashes in iron cauldrons to produce the potash which he can sell in Montreal and Quebec. From the produce of his potash, and the sale of his sheep and beeves, he has generally a surplus out of which to pay his

willing dues to the Holy Mother Church which he loves so well, and in whose teachings he so implicitly believes, or the purchase for the women-folk of the well-beloved tea, and of the gewgaws and the finery that women desire and must and will have, from the age of five to seventy or eighty, or, if they live so long, to a hundred. He is far more ignorant of the meaning of the word taxes than George Cruikshank's superb John Thomas " of the calves," and only pays them in the shape of the *corvée*, so many days' labour per annum for the maintenance of the roads, whether " dirt " or " corduroy " that traverse his district.

The most inattentive of travellers can scarcely fail to notice that the wives of the *habitans* are fresh, healthy, comely, and prolific. The children swarm at every door; and, when Madame peeps out—her curiosity excited by the noise of wheels, and the clack of the driver's whip—to see who is passing, it is most probable that she has a baby in her arms, and three or four children of larger growth hanging about her apron. And the dogs seem to be as plentiful as the children, and greet the traveller in such fashion and style as suit their age or character; sometimes, if they are young and foolish, rushing out to bark at the horses' heels; sometimes, if of maturer years, intoning their salutation in their throats, without stirring from their usual snoozing-places; or, if

they are old, experienced, and philosophic, lifting their heads a little in the sunshine, surveying the passing vehicle with lazy interest, and then lying down again to sleep, perchance to dogmatise on the ways of men.

Another noticeable and agreeable peculiarity is the love of flowers with which these fair Canadians seem to be possessed, and the abundance and beauty of the specimens which they rear at their windows. The flowers which adorn their gardens are not many. Jean Baptiste wants the garden for use and not for ornament, so Madame makes her garden at the window, and cultivates her geraniums, pelargoniums, lobelias, cinerarias, roses, and lilies with such care and success as to convert the one room of her modest cottage into a veritable bower, as richly adorned during the season of flowers as if it were the boudoir of a duchess. The day on which our party passed through St. Etienne happened to be a festival, the day of the *première communion* of all the little lasses of the village, from eleven years old and upwards, a day looked forward to by these tiny charmers with as much pleasant anticipation as at a later period they doubtless look forward to that other day when they shall also be dressed in white, and wear long white veils and white wreaths around their foreheads, and kneel before the priest at the altar at the sacrament of marriage.

The little ones whose domicile was in close proximity to the church walked to the communion dressed in white muslin, with white ribbons streaming behind, and with long white veils, looking—with the glow of health and excitement in their cheeks and eyes, and in their whole demeanour—like so many cherubim, minus the wings and plus the more ordinary helps to locomotion; and all of them, together with the fathers and mothers, or other elders who accompanied them, had a smile and a graceful recognition for the passing strangers. Those who lived at longer distances from the church were driven in cart, gig, or *calèche*; and the drivers, the fathers or brothers of the little communicants, invariably lifted their hats to us as we passed, an act of courtesy which we as invariably returned. Around the church, at every available space, were stationed the vehicles which had discharged their human freight, suggesting by their numbers what was quite evident enough before, that the Canadiennes were by no means like their American sisters further to the south, of an unprolific race, or dependent in any degree upon the immigration from Europe to keep up the parity of numbers between the annual births and deaths. To maintain the equilibrium is as much as the native-born Americans appear to be able to do, and they do not manage even *this* in some cities of the Union; whereas among the

French Canadians the tendency is to a superabundant population, as in Ireland and the Western Isles of Scotland. "How it comes, let doctors tell," as Burns says, and doctors or philosophers *will* have to tell it, sooner or later, however displeasing the explanation may be to the tender, delicate little ladies of the States, who dislike walking, live in heated rooms, and eat sweetstuff till their health suffers and their teeth become unserviceable as well as unornamental.

Jean Baptiste does not trouble himself very much about politics, and generally takes them, with his religion, from the priest. Forty years ago, however, the case was different, and he gave the British Government a good deal of trouble. Alarmed lest he should be Anglicised, and Protestantised, and "improved off the face of the earth," as the Yankees express it, he declared himself a rebel, took to arms, got together a small but valiant host, with which he defied John Bull for several months, and altogether behaved himself in a manner which, if it did not show much prudence, showed a very considerable amount of "pluck."

The British Government has never been in the habit of negotiating or parleying with rebels in arms; but having put down Jean Baptiste's rebellion by the strong hand, and got possession of the bodies of some of the most eminent leaders, it

began to inquire in all good faith and right feeling what were the grievances, real or supposed, which had driven a person usually so quiet, so good, and so amiable as Jean Baptiste, to so desperate a resort.

The result was that Jean Baptiste was found to be not altogether without ground of complaint, and that he had solid grievances—not caused so much by the injustice as by the ignorance of the British Government, and the assumption, by his fellow-colonists of British descent, of a superiority over him which he was not inclined to allow. Generous Mr. Bull did the best he could between the two parties, reformed abuses, modified the pre-existing arrangements between the British and French Canadians, and put the finishing touch to this liberal and enlightened policy by pardoning Jean Baptiste's generalissimo, Mr. Papineau, and the other civil and military chiefs of the abortive rebellion. The wise policy bore good fruits; rebels became loyalists, and Mr. Papineau himself, who at the time of my visit still lived, a prosperous and a venerable gentleman, was not only reconciled to the monarchical rule of Great Britain, but grew to be one of its staunchest friends and supporters.

From Three Rivers to the lumber station of Mr. Rousseau, on the bank of the St. Maurice, at which we had to take either a canoe or a scow to be paddled or rowed across the lake-like bend of the river to

the path that leads to the upper fall of Shawinegan, was a drive of five hours, through a country sandy, but not unfruitful, that lay in a plateau for five or six miles, and thence rose by a steep ascent of a couple of hundred feet to another plateau of similar height and width, followed by another bank and another plateau, suggesting a succession of former sea-levels, in the ancient history of our planet, when the uplands of Lake Erie were the shores of the ocean, when Niagara was not, and when what are now Canada, Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia were more than half submerged, and what was visible of them were islands of an immense archipelago.

These plateaus and shelving banks stretch inwards towards that great inland ocean which comparatively few people have ever seen, called Hudson's Bay, for hundreds of miles. At least, the geological books say so, and we may as well believe them. Mr. Rousseau had been apprised of our coming, and canoes and a scow were in readiness. My wife and daughter did not like the fragile look of the canoes, so the scow, in deference to their timidity, was chosen for our transit. Laden with our provender and our wine, which the boatmen undertook for an extra gratuity to carry up the steep path on the other side, we were speedily impelled across to the mountain-path, that led by a zigzag of three-quarters of a mile through the

brushwood and the forest to the skeleton of poor Mr. Turcotte's hotel. We were advised not to skirt along the bank to see the falls from the level of the river, but to ascend to the highest point and view them at their very best.

We paid due deference to this local judgment and were duly rewarded for our acquiescence. Though the St. Maurice was not at its full, and the depth of water not above one-half of its usual average, there was more than sufficient to produce a cataract that has not its peer in Europe, and very few in America; one that, were it within a thousand miles of London or Paris, would be annually visited by multitudes of delighted tourists. The day will doubtless come when the far-seeing design of Mr. Turcotte will be completed, when there will be a railroad from Three Rivers to Shawinegan, connecting the latter point, by the ferry over the St. Lawrence to St. Gregoire, with the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, when the great hotel will be completed and furnished, and when as many travellers as now go forth from all points of the compass to behold Niagara in its glory, will flock to Shawinegan in the drowsy and oppressive heats of the American summer, to behold a smaller but still a magnificent fall in its beauty and splendour, to feast their eyes with the sight of the cooling waters rushing over the precipices with

everlasting music, and suggesting to the most prosaic mind:

> To stand before them reverent and dumb,
> And hear their voice discoursing to the soul
> Sublime orations, tuned to psalmody;
> High thoughts of peril met and overcome,
> Of power, and beauty, and eternity,
> And the great God who bade their waters roll.

Our small party had the large banqueting-room of the hotel to ourselves—a room unglazed, only partially boarded, and more partially roofed, and encumbered with the shavings and chips and other signs of the late presence of carpenters and joiners. Our banqueting-table, overlooking the Falls, was a pile of deal boards, our seats logs of timber, to be yet, perhaps, wrought into the edifice as jambs or joists or cross-trees of the roof; and our waiters were the Canadian boatmen, who had little to do but to bring us pitchers of water from the foaming torrent to mingle with our wine. They spoke no word of English, were very grateful for the remnants of our feast, but particularly grateful for the bottle of good claret with which we presented them, a wine of which they had heard but had never seen or tasted before, and which they were delighted to know had been imported from France. "*Tiens*," said one, "and is the bottle French also? and the *bouchon*?" On being assured that the corks and bottles were both from

Bordeaux, they united in asking permission to take the empty bottles home with them as a remembrance of the old country. On being told that it was doubtful whether the champagne bottles or the champagne inside of them had ever been in France, they declined to encumber themselves with such spoil, but affectionately hugged the claret bottles, and took them down to the boat and carefully stowed them away. "And what will you do with them?" said I. "They are for Jacqueline," replied the elder boatman, "*pour mon épouse.* We shall use them every day instead of jugs or pitchers for our water or our milk, and when not in use they shall stand upon our mantel-piece among the ornaments."

On our return late at night to Three Rivers, I discovered, on alighting, that a Scottish plaid of shepherd tartan, which I had purchased in my youth in the good town of Inverness—a plaid that had since those days travelled with me over nearly half the globe, that had been my pillow, my cushion, my blanket, and my mantle, that had borne the pelting of many a pitiless storm on mountain-top and in mid-ocean, while I had walked or sat dry and cozy beneath it; a plaid which long acquaintanceship and companionship had made worth twenty times as much to me as a newer and fresher garment—was nowhere to be seen. It had been placed in the vehicle for the service of the ladies,

for protection against rain or cold; but neither rain nor cold had rendered its employment necessary. What had become of it? Had it been jolted out in the ruts of the "dirt-road" or the ridges of the "corduroy"? Or had it been stolen while our vehicle was left unprotected during our picnic on the steeps of Shawinegan? No one could tell. The driver could give no information, but admitted that during the whole time we were absent at the Falls he was either busy with his own dinner or that of his horses, and that he had left the carriage and its various contents of shawls and overcoats without supervision. On mentioning the loss to the courteous French Canadian gentleman, the resident agent at Three Rivers of the lumberers of St. Maurice, and hinting that there were but two ways in which the missing article could have gone astray, and that it was just possible that it might have proved too great a temptation for some poor *habitant*, male or female, to resist, his countenance grew suddenly dark. "Oh no," he said, with serious emphasis, "you must not say that. You do not know our people. There is not so honest a people in the world. There is not, and never was, and never will be, a thief, young or old, big or little, male or female, among them. If you dropped a purse of gold on the highway, the finder would immediately take it to the *curé* of the parish for restitution to the owner. Oh

no. The shawl is lost, and will be found. Leave the affair to me. You must not leave Three Rivers with a suspicion on your mind that there could be any dishonesty among our poor, our good *habitans*."

I must own that I felt quite ashamed of myself, and endeavoured to soothe his wounded pride by every excuse and apology I could think of. Having given him a precise description of the missing article, I added that I would cheerfully pay a reward of as many dollars as he might name to the finder. This offer had well-nigh made matters worse. "A reward for doing right! Oh *no*," he added, "that is not our way in Canada. You must not think of such a thing." I saw that I was wrong again; and he saw, also, that I was sorry, and generously forgave me. Two days afterwards the plaid was returned with the compliments of the *curé* of St. Etienne, and a note stating that it had been found by a young girl in the road, and brought to him the same evening for restitution to the owner. With that base feeling so common among Britons that money is the best and only recompense for a good action, I was anxious to send the good *curé* a few dollars as a contribution towards the infant-school —if there were one—or the poor-box, or the hospital. "Do nothing of the kind," said the merchant of Three Rivers; "why attempt to spoil and demoralise a good and simple people? You might as well reward them for eating their dinners

with a good appetite, as for performing what to them appears a matter of the simplest duty." So the money was not sent, and I came away from the villages of the *habitans* with the impression, which time is not likely [illegible]e, that a happier and more innocent pe[illegible] not easily to be found on the face of the [illegible]ent, or the old one either.