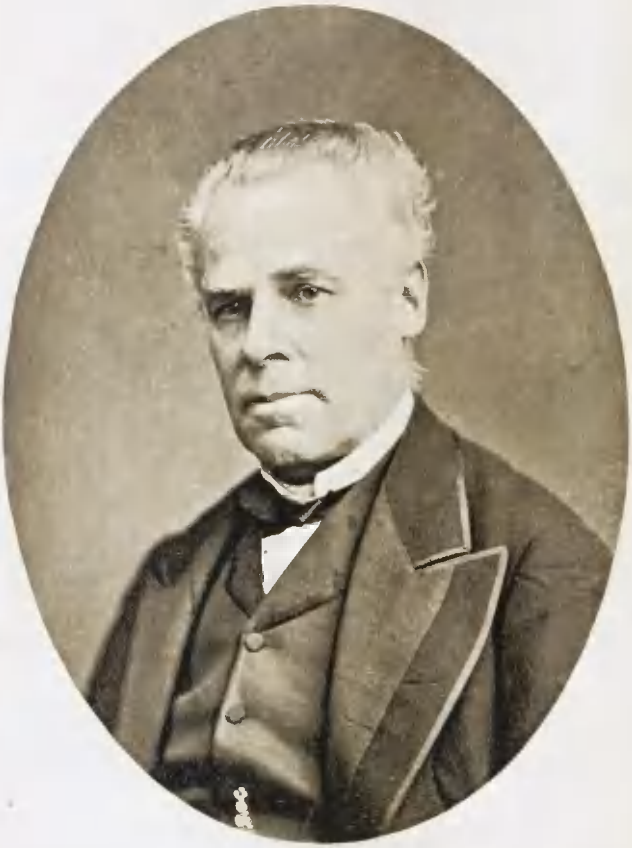
SIR GEORGES ÉTIENNE CARTIER



Geo. H. Carter

THE MAKERS OF CANADA

SIR GEORGES CARTIER

BY

ALFRED D. DECELLES

TORONTO
MORANG & CO., LIMITED
1913

THE MAKERS OF CANADA

SIR GEORGES CARTIER

BY

ALFRED D. DECELLES

TORONTO

MORANG & CO., LIMITED

1911

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I Page

YOUTH AND REVOLT 1

CHAPTER II

CANADA AFTER THE REBELLION . . 11

CHAPTER III

IN PUBLIC LIFE 21

CHAPTER IV

IN POWER 31

CHAPTER V

TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION . . . 43

CHAPTER VI

CONFEDERATION OF THE BRITISH PROVINCES . 55

CHAPTER VII

CONFLICT AND VICTORIES . . . 67

CONTENTS

CHAPTER VIII

Page

CARTIER AND THE CHURCH . . . 79

CHAPTER IX

CARTIER AND THE MILITIA . . . 87

CHAPTER X

CARTIER AND LA FONTAINE . . . 95

CHAPTER XI

CHARACTER AND POLICY . . . 105

INDEX 135

CHAPTER I

YOUTH AND REVOLT

WHEN Georges Étienne Cartier, the subject of this biography, entered the political arena, his native province of Lower Canada was on the verge of sedition. Carried away, like all the young men of his day, by the eloquence of that powerful tribune, Papineau, he one day found himself in open rebellion against the British crown, of which he was, in a few years, to be one of the most stalwart supporters. The contradiction, however, between Cartier's two antagonistic attitudes is more apparent than real. His opposition, which drifted into revolt, was not directed against the British sovereign, but against the party, an insignificant minority, who, having laid their hands on the government, used it for their special ends and profit, and denied to French Canadians all the privileges and rights of the British subject. But as soon as self-government was granted to Lower Canada, no more loyal upholder of the British constitution than Cartier was to be met in North America.

It is not our purpose to attempt a justification of the furious agitation which culminated in open battle at St. Denis and St. Charles. But is it not fair to ask whether the administrators of the day

had not abused the patience of the people beyond the limits of endurance, when year after year they resisted the legitimate requests of the Canadians for constitutional government in fact as well as in name? Since 1800 the discontented Canadians had been asked: "But have you not a most liberal constitution: why do you complain?" The fact of the matter is that the governor and the legislative council had concentrated all authority in their hands and constantly frustrated the will of the lower house. The representatives of the people were in the positions of persons craving water: they were offered an excellent glass, but it was empty. They had been since 1820 asking for the complete control of the provincial finances, and in 1837 Lord John Russell's resolutions placed it practically in the hands of the executive.

In no other section of the country did the feeling against the hated bureaucrats—the family compact of Lower Canada—run so high as along the Richelieu. The pretty villages, extending on both sides of the river from Sorel to Chambly, with fine churches raising their tall spires, and neat looking farm-houses, give one the impression of a rich and happy land, too happy to be a scene of bloody encounters. In those days, St. Ours, St. Charles, St. Marc, St. Antoine and Chambly were the seats of aristocratic French families, from whom the people took their direction in politics. With the advent of democracy and the progress of education among

the people, this has all been changed, and many of those influential families have also disappeared. But when Papineau, at the full height of his furious attacks against the government, determined to strike a great blow to show his power, it was at St. Charles that he convened the delegates of the six counties.

At St. Antoine, one of those hotbeds of rebellion, Cartier was born of parents who traced their genealogy to the family of Jacques Cartier, the discoverer of Canada. His ancestors had come to this country in 1759 and settled at Quebec, which they left in 1760 to build up a new home at St. Antoine. His grandfather and father were merchants. Cartier once stated that he should have followed their calling instead of studying law. To atavism he owed his taste and aptitude for business and his strong grasp of matters pertaining to trade and commerce.

When old enough to attend school he was sent to the Montreal College, then as now under the management of the Sulpicians, or *les Messieurs de St. Sulpice* as they were called in the old style. The process of his intellectual formation was not different from that of any French lad in the hands of the priests. This process is peculiar enough in itself and in its surprising results to be worth describing to persons not familiar with the customs prevailing in Quebec.

It must indeed seem strange and abnormal to our

English-speaking citizens to see British subjects of the twentieth century brought up and educated under rules laid down when Louis XIV reigned, and modified only in minor details later on to suit the times. The substantial education dispensed to the youth of Quebec is still almost wholly permeated with French notions of the seventeenth century. The craving for hero worship is gratified in the history of France, whose traditions of glory and honour form part of our national inheritance. In literature, Bossuet, Racine, Fénelon, and all the writers of the *grand siècle* are the models offered to the imitation and admiration of young French Canadians, who seldom come in contact with Shakespeare and Milton except in translated excerpts. Moreover, English is indifferently taught in the Quebec schools. For years it was viewed by many as the language of heresy and of the conqueror. Fortunately, as a counterpoise to this apparently anti-English education, there exists the all-powerful teaching of the Church, who claims for herself and for all powers submission and obedience. The first duty of the subject in civil and political order is subordination to the government which holds its rule from God: *Omnis potestas a Deo.* Under the beneficent ecclesiastical influence, social and religious asperities are worn out and smoothed down; and it is with a strong sense of sacred obligation that Catholics offer in their Church prayers for their separate brethren.

No more moral and severe tuition could be given, nor under closer watchfulness. The pupils of the Quebec colleges are daily reminded of their duties to God, their neighbours, and the state. Thanks to the clerical teaching with its strong conservative tendencies, the mind of the young French Canadian is shaped on the mould of monarchical ideas; with the effect of binding it to English institutions in preference to democratic systems of government. The natural consequence of this education did not escape Lord Elgin's penetrating observation. He attributed to it the loyalty of the French Canadian to Britain, and he has this in his mind when writing to Lord Grey in 1848: "Let them feel that their religion, their habits, are more considered here than in other portions of this vast continent; who will venture to say that the last hand which waves the British flag on American ground may not be that of a French Canadian?"

A century and a half of loyal devotion to the British crown, strongly exemplified during the American wars of 1775 and 1812, stands to prove the striking truth of Guizot's opinion, himself a Protestant, that the Catholic Church is a school of respect. Out of respect for the government springs submission to its command and control.

The influence of Papineau must have been overpowering, and the petty persecutions of the oligarchy of the Château St. Louis very exasperating, to have overcome temporarily in Cartier's soul the loyal

sentiments which he had imbibed at St. Sulpice. The fact of the matter is that the rulers at Quebec seemed to have concentrated their efforts to hurt the feelings and pride of the French subjects. At every turn of their civil and political life they were made to feel that the governors and their friends considered them an inferior race, unfit to take a share in the government of the country. The work of the lower house at Quebec was rendered barren, the legislative council constantly nullifying its efforts. Even the military authorities in those days took sides with the oligarchy, and never failed to look down with scorn on the *habitants*. But, we may ask, was not the Canada Act of 1791 a great advance on previous imperial legislation? It undeniably was, but is it not also a fact that the best constitution may become an instrument of persecution and injustice in the hands of obtuse or wily men deprived of the sense of justice? Even Upper Canada had grievances under the Act of 1791, but the problem to be solved there was not so complex; it was free from questions of race and almost free from those of religion.

Is it to be wondered that the intelligent youth of the day rallied around Papineau, who then stood as the living symbol of the demand for justice of a down-trodden population? The oppression of the rulers must have been galling, for it arrayed against them level-headed and moderate men like La Fontaine, and even sweet-tempered, easy-going

men like Morin. Cartier was drawn towards the patriots by his fiery temper and the strong conviction that he and his friends were under a ban in their own country. Moreover, was he not breathing the spirit of insubordination in the law firm of Maître Edouard Rodier, the great tribune of the Montreal suburbs, and second only to Papineau as a convincing, blood-stirring orator? Under these strong influences he was only too well prepared to join *Les Fils de la Liberté* when that society was organized in imitation of the American Sons of Liberty. He became their poet in spite of the muses, for he lacked the sacred fire. Still his lines, patriotism helping, were soul-inspiring, and the *Fils de la Liberté* sang them to the top of their voices when parading the streets of Montreal in search of their enemies of the Doric Club.

Our poet and law student was carried away with his friends; his fervour soon capped the climax, and when Colonel Gore marched on St. Denis to crush the incipient rebellion, Cartier shouldered a musket with the other raw recruits armed with shot-guns and scythes. It was a miracle that they repulsed the Waterloo veterans. A few days later his ardour and enthusiasm urged him on to the neighbouring parish of St. Charles, where Nelson met a terrible defeat at the hands of Colonel Wetherall. When more tranquil days brought Cartier to power, he was often taken to task for the part he had taken in the rebellion. His

opponents were wont to represent him fighting in *habitant* garb with the blue bonnet—*la tuque bleue*—then worn by his countrymen. Cowardice was also hinted at, but it has been established beyond controversy that he behaved bravely under fire. At St. Charles he was entrusted by Nelson with a mission which required both pluck and nerve: namely, to cross the Richelieu under the enemy's fusillade to get supplies from St. Marc on the opposite shore.

Under the scathing fire of Wetherall, the peasantry scattered in every direction, and Cartier attempted to seek a refuge in the United States. It was late in the autumn; the cold, rainy weather of November and the bad roads rendered the young patriot's flight painful. He wandered through the forests, suffering from want of food and the inclemency of the season, and finally lost his way. Then the safest course seemed to him to retrace his steps and find some hiding place near home. He succeeded in reaching Varennes, where a farmer harboured him during the winter. It was reported at the time that he had perished in the woods, and *Le Canadien*, of Quebec, lamented the death of this young man full of genial qualities, to whom the future promised a brilliant career.

When spring returned it was considered safer for Cartier to abandon his retreat, and place the American frontier between himself and the police, who were scouring the country about Montreal in search

of rebels. He reached Burlington, where he remained until Gosford's amnesty proclamation allowed him to return to Montreal, which he entered wholly free of the illusions under which he had lately lived, but not regretting the sacrifice he had made to the cause of freedom. He knew that liberty is often dearly bought, and that frequently it rises out of streams of blood.

If it were my purpose to attempt a justification of the insurrection of 1837, might not that outburst find extenuating circumstances in the fact that it was not committed through malice aforethought, but was the spontaneous movement of a people labouring under great provocation? The opening of the hostilities occurred as follows: on a certain day the *habitants* of St. Charles and St. Denis were told that warrants had been issued against their leaders, men whose life-long devotion to the popular cause had won the trust and gratitude of every Lower Canadian. These men were known to them as ardent patriots, animated by a boundless love for their country. It is not surprising then that, swayed by a natural indignation, they should have promptly resolved to protect Papineau and Nelson who were in their midst.

There was in this insurrection one of those chivalrous impulses impossible to suppress, which one is compelled to admire, although it is condemned and reproved by calm judgment. Therefore the French Canadians will ever piously treasure up the memory

of those peasants, brave men though deluded, who, with a few muskets, scythes, and sticks, dared to engage in a fight with soldiers ranking with the best the world had seen. To the gratitude of posterity towards the men of 1837 has been added a large measure of admiration, and now it is widely admitted that this spontaneous rebellion hastened the advent of constitutional liberty, and secured for the whole race the coveted rights of British subjects so long witheld from them. A heavy cloud shrouded the horizon in those troublous times, but it was blown away with the smoke of battle, and there appeared the dawn of the better days which all Canada now enjoys.

CHAPTER II

CANADA AFTER THE REBELLION

WHEN Cartier returned to Canada, after his unfortunate experience in the ill-advised rebellion, the country was living its darkest days, and for several years it seemed as though the French Canadian race was doomed to political servitude. If a storm bursts on the ocean the billows keep up their motions a long time after its fury has abated. Likewise in the political order, when a country has been convulsed by a rebellion, the consequences of the outbreak are felt after its suppression. In Lower Canada it was not until 1846 that the province finally regained its equilibrium, after ministerial responsibility had duly been accepted by all concerned.

The first outcome of the political trouble of 1837 was the suspension by the British parliament of the constitution of 1791, under which Lower Canada had been ruled for forty-six years. It was replaced by the Special Council, a body composed of crown nominees entrusted with the *pro tempore* government of the country. In 1838, Lord Durham made an inquiry into the state of the province, and reported to the home government the causes, from his standpoint, of the past troubles, and proposed as a prevention of their recurrence the union of

Lower with Upper Canada, so as to place in power an overwhelming English majority, which would annihilate French influence altogether, and bring about in time the complete anglification of the population. Mr. Poulett Thomson was sent out to Canada to carry out in part Lord Durham's suggestion, and set the new political machine in motion.

The new governor-general, a self-made man of very high attainments, had made his mark in the House of Commons, where he was looked upon as a most clever parliamentarian. His published correspondence bears evidence to the brilliancy of his mind, which was tinged by gleams of sceptical humour. He would have been well fitted for his high office, had he not allowed himself to be influenced on his arrival here against the population of Lower Canada, and it might be said, against Canadians in general, if we may judge from the off-hand manner in which he spoke privately of his ministers. The task of obtaining the Special Council's approval of the union scheme was an easy one. It was voted almost unanimously, although the French population of Lower Canada registered their protest against it. How could they assume another attitude? Their death-warrant was asked for in Lord Durham's report, wherein he pointed out that it was in the interest of the British Empire that they should be merged into the Anglo-Saxon race. Lord Durham had exposed the faults of the constitution

of 1791, which had fostered the grievances long complained of, and which were the cause of the recent outbreak. Was it reasonable that the faults of that instrument should be visited upon them?

After his success with the Special Council, Thomson directed his efforts towards Upper Canada, where the population was not averse to the union. At its session of 1839, the Upper Canada legislative assembly accepted the proposal on the following terms:

1. That the seat of government of the united provinces should be in Upper Canada.

2. That the members returned to the assembly from each province should be, from Lower Canada fifty, from Upper Canada sixty-two, with a faculty of increase with increase of population.

3. That after a time, not later than 1845, the elective franchise in counties should be restricted to those holding their lands in free and common socage.

4. That the English language alone should be spoken and used in the legislature and in courts of justice, and in all other public proceedings.

These resolutions, had they been put in force, would have stripped the French Canadians of all political power, disfranchised them, and finally made them strangers not only in parliament but also in their courts of justice. The corporation of Toronto was in perfect harmony with the House, for it had sent an address to Thomson embodying senti-

ments very hostile to Lower Canada. Thomson lectured the Upper Canadians mildly, and made them understand that their demands could not be entertained. He disliked, it is true, the eastern province, where, according to his notion, "the climate, the soil, and the population are below par," but he felt that such an act of proscription as was asked for would be worthy only of an eastern despot, although the ultimatum of the Upper Canadians seemed in harmony with Lord Durham's recommendations. His plan was, therefore, to place the union scheme on a more acceptable basis, and to substitute as a motive power self-interest for national prejudice. This was not brought about without a prodigious deal of management, in which, as he said, "My House of Commons tactics stood me in good stead." He drew the legislative council's and assembly's attention to the straits in which the province was then placed for want of money. The fact of the matter is that it was on the verge of bankruptcy. With an annual revenue of not more than £78,000, the charge for interest on its debt was £65,000, and the permanent expenses of government £55,000, leaving an annual deficiency of £42,000. On the other hand Lower Canada had no debt, but had a surplus of £300,000. Thomson's appeal succeeded, and the legislature, foregoing its first conditions, accepted rescue from bankruptcy by the compelled help of Lower Canada. Lord Metcalfe was justified when he said a few

years later: "The union was effected without the consent of Lower Canada, and with the hesitating but purchased assent of Upper Canada." The writer does not recall the above facts to indulge in retrospective recrimination, but to depict the situation in which Cartier stood in his early days, and also to indicate how greatly public opinion has been elevated since 1840; then the proscription of a whole race was asked for, and now Canadians from all parts do not look upon the presence of a French Canadian at the head of the state as an abnormal fact.

The machinery of union was put in motion by Thomson (now Lord Sydenham). With the utmost boldness he threw himself into the electoral battle in Lower Canada, using all the government influence against French candidates, and finally won the day. His majority in the new House was enormous, and from his own point of view he could well boast of having the French Canadians at his feet. There seemed but little hope for the latter to get even a small share in the government of the country. Through their representative men, the clergy and the best citizens of Quebec and Montreal, they had protested against the union without avail. What was next to be done? A certain number of them, giving up all hopes of getting justice, proposed to continue the battle of former days, and to become irreconcilable opponents of British rule; the larger number were disposed to wait and take advantage of

circumstances. It occurred to them that the English majority would not long remain compact under the pressure of divergent interests, and that an alliance might be formed with one faction or the other. Such was the view that La Fontaine and Cartier took of the situation. Cartier was not to sulk under his tent and remain in constant opposition. But his buoyant courage led him to expect a day of reckoning for his enemies. His foresight did not fail him on this occasion, and he hoped to turn the compulsory marriage into *un mariage de raison.*

Although the Union Act conceded responsible government to Canada, it was not the governor's intention to allow his ministers full scope in the matter of ruling the country. The elections had returned to parliament a body of men bound to execute the absolute will of the governor. This would not meet the views of Robert Baldwin, who seeing that the governor was determined to give his cabinet the appearance of power but to keep the reality in his hands, resigned his portfolio to form an alliance with Mr. La Fontaine, the head of the French Canadian party. It is through the exertions and courage of these two men, great and noble characters, that Canada finally secured ministerial responsibility. After Lord Sydenham's death, Sir Charles Bagot called the Liberal leaders to his council, giving them full power to put the Union Act into operation according to its spirit and to English precedents. Unfortunately, Bagot's term of

office was cut short by his demise, and Sir Charles Metcalfe, who had played the part of a pro-consul in India, and who thought that colonials were not mentally equipped for self-government, attempted to rule according to his own ideas, which were those of Sydenham. This brought on a crisis, resulting in the resignation of La Fontaine and Baldwin, who were superseded by the Draper ministry, composed of English Canadians, with the exception of D. B. Viger. The latter was an old-time Liberal, one of Papineau's lieutenants during the late trouble, and his acceptance of office was a surprise to his countrymen, and considered almost as a betrayal of the national cause. He sought re-election in St. Hyacinthe, where he met a determined opposition. Cartier took the field against him, a circumstance to be noted, for it was then (1844) that he made the first political speech of which we have a record. The future minister took occasion to condemn his past career, and to criticize the methods used to bring about a desirable end. He laid the blame on the older men, whom he thought responsible for the outbreak of 1837, and was very outspoken in his denunciation of Viger. "The responsibility of the unfortunate events of 1837," said he, "rests on the leaders of the public opinion of that time. Mr. Viger was one of them. He should have used the influence which he then wielded to give better advice to his countrymen. He and his friends, as politicians, should have had

more foresight and more wisdom. Now Mr. Viger is striving to divide Lower Canadians by giving a helping hand to the schemes of Sir Charles Metcalfe; but Lower Canada will let them know in a few days by an almost unanimous voice, that it remains attached to ministerial responsibility, on which depends, in the present and in the future, the salvation of Lower Canada." Viger was defeated, chiefly through Cartier's vigorous effort in favour of constitutional government, and the victory was but the forerunner of the triumph of Baldwin and La Fontaine, who were returned to power in 1846. With them finally triumphed responsible government in its entirety.

As far as Cartier is concerned, this election is interesting because it gave him an opportunity to express his opinion on the troubles which had supplied him with experience dearly bought—a narrow escape from the gallows, proscription, and exile with its accompanying hardships. The past methods of dealing with political grievances then appeared to the sobered enthusiast as dangerous. In after life he never forgave Papineau for taking advantage of his want of experience to enroll him under the flag of rebellion, and has seldom a kind word to say for the famous tribune. Although Cartier, in the speech just quoted, was very severe on his past conduct, he cuts the figure of a half-repentant rebel, when, in addressing his former companions in arms, he extols their bravery: "Electors

of St. Denis, you showed your pluck and daring bravery, when, on November 22nd, 1837, with a few muskets, hay-forks, and sticks as weapons, you conquered Gore's troops. I was with you, and I have not been found, I think, wanting in courage. To-day I call upon you to give a greater and more sensible proof of patriotic intelligence; I entreat you to fight with your votes—a more formidable weapon—those men bent upon keeping up the oppression of the past by robbing the country of the advantages of responsible government. Yes, voters of this noble parish, do your duty, set a salutary example, and all Lower Canada will be proud of you." As he appeared in this, his first important political campaign, outspoken, fearless of the political consequences of his speech, so we shall find him throughout his career. His great success in life was in part due to his sincerity and uprightness, which stamped him as one to be trusted under all circumstances. In his declining years, he prided himself upon never having broken his promise; his word in all things was a word of honour. When the Queen conferred a baronetcy upon him he chose as his motto *Franc et sans dol* (Honest and without deceit). This motto seems a natural outgrowth of his qualities, the true expression of his life, characterized as it was by his loyalty to Canada and devotion to his friends.

CHAPTER III

IN PUBLIC LIFE

CANADIANS who have made their mark in public life have, as a rule, entered parliament when comparatively young. It was in 1849, at the age of thirty-four, that Cartier took his seat in the House of Assembly to represent Verchères. Late as his *début* was, it did not prevent him from advancing with rapid strides towards the treasury benches. His success is easily accounted for when one considers his talents and long preparation for public life. It had never occurred to him, as it does to so many, that it is possible to engage in politics without preliminary studies. He had a high conception of public life, with the many and heavy responsibilities which it throws on the man who is actuated by a nobler aim than mere personal advancement.

He was a born ruler of men. Nature, it seems, endows certain individuals with the gift of command as she adorns others with the genius of poetry. Such men as Cartier are seldom met with in our midst. It is surprising to note how numerous are the ready and fluent speakers among the French population, and how few are fit to lead. To grasp a situation, to foresee the evolution of public opinion,

with its bearing on events, are parts of the art of government. Cartier had the mastery of that art to a high degree. It was his good fortune soon to acquire that great authority which eminence in knowledge and talent gives. He was a man of quick resolve, a faculty also seldom found in politicians. Thanks to his aptitudes, the actual leadership of his party fell into his hands before he was officially called to assume it. His influence was so great at the outset that in 1851 he was offered a portfolio in the Hincks-Morin administration. Two years later Lord Elgin and Mr. Hincks pressed him to become a member of the cabinet. It was only in 1855, when Morin was called to the bench, that he was finally persuaded to accept the responsibilities which he could no longer refuse. But before he entered the cabinet he had played the part of a minister in the House. In fact he led the government forces, supporting their measures, fighting their battles, and extending a sort of protection over them.

When Cartier consented to take a portfolio he was at the head of an important law firm in Montreal, and briefs came into his hands in great number from the best mercantile establishments; the Grand Trunk Railway Company, then in its infancy, also entrusted him with its business. From 1855 to the day of his death, in 1873, his name remained with the firm of Cartier, Pominville & Bétournay; but, as it will presently be shown, public

duties kept him away from the Montreal court-house and a profitable business. He was admitted to the bar in 1835, and his legal training of almost twenty years was an excellent preparation for parliament. His mind had become permeated with those sound principles of law which gave him such power in debate on the floor of the House. His legal knowledge was also of use in another and a more important field: it helped him to follow closely the tradition of the "*coutume de Paris*" in framing the legislation of his native province. To this day the large number of statutes which his activity put through parliament bear the imprint of his strong mind. For twenty-five years Cartier was in power, with but short intervals of opposition. It will not be out of place to show how he succeeded in maintaining himself in office for such a long term, at the head of a party full of conflicting ideas, and in a democratic community antagonistic, by natural instinct, to long-standing cabinets. This success was not due to his sterling merit alone, but to causes which it will be interesting to note, so that his career may be clearly understood.

Cartier's long tenure in office was not due to a lack of talented men, for at no time in the political history of Canada were there in the field more distinguished men than in his day. Not to mention Papineau, La Fontaine, and Morin, who belong to the previous generation, it is possible to rank very near him several able lawyers and clever writers. In the

first place stood Cauchon, a fine speaker and a vigorous journalist. He had very few equals as a polemist, and with his constitutional knowledge he would have made his mark even in England. He wielded in *Le Journal de Québec* a powerful pen against those whom he was pleased to call the enemies of his race and religion, George Brown and his followers. His ambition was to become the leader of the Conservatives, but Cartier barred the way, and the latter received from this rival but an indifferent support. Cauchon was the leader of the Conservatives in the district of Quebec, where, with the young men of the day, he kept the Liberals at bay—led though they were by such men as Fournier, Plamondon, and Huot. Cauchon wrote the best commentaries on the Quebec Conference resolution, which became the British North America Act. It was this able contribution to the discussion of the confederation scheme that was largely instrumental in gaining the approval of the clergy, who at first were loath to accept the proposed new order of things. With less talent Sicotte also played an important part in parliament among the followers of Cartier, until he left him to form the Liberal Macdonald-Sicotte administration. Chauveau was another prominent Conservative, but his literary attainments finally inclined him towards more congenial labours than those of a member of parliament, and he assumed the honourable and important duties of superintendent of public education. Near these politicians was

also to be found the bright and fascinating Loranger, a ready speaker, bristling with irony and sarcasm, who seemed called to advancement in public life, and deservedly so. The men just referred to were Conservatives of a more or less pronounced type.

Arrayed against Cartier, the Liberals had at their head men of whom they were justly proud: Aimé Dorion, Papineau's disciple, with his brother Eric, surnamed *"l'Enfant terrible;"* and next to them Laflamme, Dessaules, Fournier, Doutre, Daoust, Laberge, Papin—all popular speakers, all with generous, but none the less with misconceived, aspirations. Most of them attained a high position after Cartier had disappeared from the arena. They would probably have conquered him long before he died had they not been handicapped by their radical ideas and compromised by their "clear Grit" allies of Upper Canada, who were then clamouring against the institutions of the Eastern Province. Great admirers of Papineau, holding the liberal ideas which the oppression of former days had fostered, they were ready to fill their sails with the wind of radicalism which during the Revolution of 1848 in France swept all over the world.

The downfall of Louis Philippe and the proclamation of the Republic had produced an immense impression in Canada. As a consequence a democratic party was organized, and the French Canadian Liberal party, led by La Fontaine, was split

into two sections. At that time there was no organization bearing the name Conservative in the Province of Quebec. The new faction followed Papineau and Aimé Dorion. Their platform smacked of the French revolutionary notions of 1848; it was akin to Louis Blanc's red-hot tirades against monarchy and its real or pretended abuses.

One cannot read to-day the democratic programme of 1849 without smiling. It was evidently the production of very inexperienced young men, brimful of an enthusiasm which made them accept the utopian dreams of their French prototypes on social questions. They, however, stopped short of socialism. The reforms which they advocated to bring about the millenium in Canada, comprised annual parliaments, an elective judiciary, even annexation to the United States!

A paper, *L'Avenir*, was started in the interest of the would-be reformers, whose trend of ideas may be gathered from the following extract of their appeal to the public, evolved at a meeting of the *Club démocratique* of Montreal, the head of the party faction: "Democrats by conviction," said the programme, "and of French Canadian origin, it grieves us to think that the electric fluid of democracy, which flashes over the civilized world, would run through Canada uselessly for want of a conducting wire on the soil of this New World. Without universal suffrage, where is the legitimate and rational consecration of authority? Will it be the drop of oil from

La Sainte Ampoule (the vial used at the coronation of French kings) dripping on his forehead that will transform a man into a monarch and legislator for a whole nation? It is our misfortune not to look upon sovereignty in that light. We then shall take the liberty of discarding the oily performance of Rheims, and give our preference to the strong and pure consecration which in 1848 burst forth from the soul of a noble people. In former ages, Christianity, sciences, arts and printing were given to the nations to civilize them; now popular education, commerce and universal suffrage will make them free."

It would be unfair to saddle the whole Liberal party with the responsibility of the ultra-radicalism of 1849; many disapproved of it and dreaded its exaggerations. But they had thrown in their lot with these men of anti-British and anti-Catholic sentiment, and in consequence they found themselves out of harmony with the clergy and the great bulk of their countrymen. Referring to these misguided politicians of fifty years ago, Sir Wilfrid Laurier once said,[1] "The only excuse of these Liberals was their youth, the oldest of them was not twenty-two. . . . However, they had hardly advanced a few steps in life when they perceived their great error. As early as 1852 they published another newspaper, leaving *L'Avenir* to

[1] Discours sur le libéralisme politique par W. Laurier, Québec, 26 juin, 1877.

the hot-headed, and they tried to find, but not always with success, it is true, the new path which the friends of liberty should follow under the new constitution. . . . The clergy, alarmed at their conduct, which recalled too much the attitude of European revolutionists, declared an unmerciful war on the new party. The English population, friendly to liberty, but also loving order, turned against the new party, which for twenty-five years has remained in opposition."

These were not the only compromising connections of the Liberals. They were unmistakably associated with George Brown, the avowed enemy of Lower Canada, who was at that time fighting for Protestant and English supremacy. Brown's policy of representation by population was a principle just in itself, perhaps, but contrary to the Union Act of 1840, which gave equal representation to both provinces. Dorion accepted population as the basis of representation, and it was this concession to his Grit ally, which drew from Cartier this bitter remark to Dorion: "Your friend Laberge has stated that when you accepted representation by population, you cast the cannon ball that killed the Liberal party."

It has been charged against Cartier that he courted clerical influence, and against the Lower Canadian priests that they threw into the struggle the weight of their spiritual power in favour of the Conservatives. All this was greatly exaggerated for

political purposes, but even if the clergy had stepped into the arena, who would blame them to-day? Was it not simply for them a question of self-defence? Could they remain absolutely neutral when both their national and religious existence were at stake? Could they close their ears when powerful men, riding the "Protestant horse," clamoured vociferously: "No popery and down with French domination"?

It was their dangerous allies and their radical programme that kept Dorion and his friends in opposition so long, and gave Cartier such powerful hold over his countrymen. Had political issues been confined to economic questions, to tariff, trade and commerce, he could not have withstood for so long the assaults of such able men as Dorion, Fournier, Laflamme, Laberge, and a host of others equally brilliant and full of generous aspirations for the welfare of the people, but with ill-conceived notions for reaching the desired goal. It was their misfortune to maintain their opponents in power. In 1863, Cartier boasted at Toronto that out of forty-two constituencies the Liberals had only carried thirteen.

Time and experience taught a severe lesson to Dorion and his friends, who finally eschewed radicalism. Yet suspicion clung to them for many years, even after confederation, although the contest between the Conservatives and Liberals was then waged on immediate political issues. In 1872, at the suggestion of Messrs. Jetté, F. Langelier,

Laurier, Pelletier, Mercier, David, and several younger men of the party, an effort was made to place Liberalism under other colours. A meeting was held at Quebec on March 8th, and resolutions embodying the views of the leaders on strictly political issues, were adopted. A letter was read from Mercier in which he eulogized the clergy and requested them, in the meantime, to consider him and his co-religionists as friends. It was an attempt to dispel all past misunderstandings. The new organization then appeared in the field as *Le Parti National*, with an organ called *Le National*, published in Montreal.

Thus the Liberals broke away from all notions repugnant to the great mass of French Canadians. The doubts which still overhung their fortune melted away by degrees, and the day dawned when they appeared just as orthodox as their opponents. By a curious coincidence, the first important victim of the reorganized party was Cartier himself, who was defeated at the general election of 1872.

CHAPTER IV

IN POWER

IT was in the month of January, 1855, that Cartier was for the first time sworn in as a member of the executive council. He had been for a long time the power behind the throne; it was only fair to the public and to his opponents that he should assume the responsibility of a policy which was distinctly his own.

For the first time also his name then came before the country connected with that of John A. Macdonald, an alliance which lasted until the death of one of the partners. Their respective beginnings in life did not indicate that they would, one day, work together hand in hand; for their political creed had placed them face to face as opponents in the House. A man is hardly responsible for peculiar views in the early part of his life; he inherits the ideas which permeate the ambient air in which his first years are spent; when he prides himself upon his strong convictions, he is only an unconscious slave of persons who have taught him to think as they themselves thought.

Macdonald first appeared in parliament as an uncompromising Tory of the old MacNab type. He was not far from the Upper Canada Assembly's

narrow-minded notions in reference to Lower Canada. It was his wont to be then found in the ranks of those most opposed to La Fontaine. He voted against the proposed settlement of the seigniorial tenure when Cartier earnestly voiced the wishes of his people in that matter, and during the debate on the Indemnity Bill, which provided that the government should indemnify the loyal Lower Canadians who had suffered losses through the rebellion, he qualified that simple measure of justice as a reward to treason. When Lord Elgin gave the royal assent to the Indemnity Bill, he was not with the mob that pelted the governor with stones and rotten eggs, sacked La Fontaine's residence, and burned the house of parliament, but he was politically associated with these firebrands, with such men as Moir Ferris, whom afterwards he appointed to important offices. His prejudices were bound to disappear with time as he escaped from early influences, and came in contact with Lower Canadian representative men. His experience was similar to that of so many other of his friends whose intercourse with French Canadians showed them that they were not as black as they had been painted.

Cartier could not afford to renounce any of his ideals. He was on the defensive and directing his effort to gain political equality for his countrymen of Lower Canada. At the time to which we refer, the principles which were to be his guiding star through life had taken a strong hold on his mind,

and he had no intention of forsaking any of them. How could he? Was he not simply claiming equal justice and equal rights for all in the face of men who were advocating privileges for a class of British subjects, superior in their mind to their neighbours? When, therefore, it was mooted in the House and in political circles that the Upper Canada Tories desired to form an alliance with the Lower Canada Liberals, he boldly told MacNab and Macdonald that if they courted his fellowship they must first alter their views. "If the Upper Canada Conservatives desire to form a coalition with us Liberals, they must give up many of their principles." It was in this firm language that Cartier laid down (June 26th, 1854), in the House, the fundamental condition of an understanding between his friends and the Tories of Upper Canada, and when this alliance materialised with the MacNab-Morin administration (the latter soon to be replaced by Taché) Cartier was in a position to state (Feb. 14th, 1855) at Verchères, in answer to the charge that he was a Tory, because he had formed an alliance with MacNab: "There are no more Tories in the sense formerly attached to this qualification. The old Tories have weakened their principles *(mis de l'eau dans leur vin)* and have given up antiquated ideas which were their own. In the alliance which we have made, it is Sir Allan who has come to the Lower Canada minority. We have not abandoned any of our positions; can a statesman refuse

support offered to his cause?" It was in those words that he explained the nature of the compromise which formed the conditions of the Liberal-Conservative alliance, when he came forward in Verchères seeking re-election as a cabinet minister.

Cartier was in such a position that he could not remove one plank from his platform, built as it was upon equal rights for all classes, both in the political and religious spheres; minor matters only were open to compromise and concessions. His general policy was, nevertheless, bitterly attacked in Verchères although it was unimpeachable from the national point of view. It seems as though his opponents foresaw in the young minister the man who for nearly twenty years would stand between them and power. In the eyes of *Le Moniteur*, a Liberal paper of the day, *he was the Grand Trunk Railway solicitor*. This was a crime, for the famous company was then subjected to all sorts of slanderous imputations. The same paper denounced him also as the *supporter of monopolies, of the seigneurs, the upholder of well-paid government situations, a breeder of corruption, the enemy of justice, the champion of illegal measures, the apostle of servitude, the partisan of passive obedience, a human conscience vendor, a Tory minister, a jobber.* Such were the epithets too often used in those days against political opponents. If a man's merit is to be measured by the attacks he is subjected to, Cartier indeed was a great man, for he has been assailed as very

few politicians have been in Canada. But all this vituperation appears to be the unavoidable stock in trade of politics. A French statistician and bibliophilist has jotted down the titles of eight thousand pamphlets written against Cardinal Mazarin, when he was first minister of France, and this with the total absence of newspapers and with slow press work. But the cardinal outlived that storm of ink and paper, like many another eminent statesman.

From the day he entered the cabinet to the day of his death, Cartier's career was a useful and fruitful one for his country. His activity spread itself over every part of national life, imparting to each new blood and strength. The field of his labour might be divided into two parts, one being his native province and the other Canada at large. Public education, the seigniorial tenure, the judiciary, the codification of the laws of Lower Canada were among the subjects which occupied his attention in Quebec. It cannot be claimed that he alone settled the land tenure of the country. It had been before the public and parliament for many years. But the questions of acquired rights, the rival claims of the seigniors and their *censitaires* raised a mountain of obstacles which no one dared touch until Cartier and his friends resolved to grapple with its huge bulk.

It will not be out of place here to outline the main features of the ancient land tenure, which, to many outsiders, is still looked upon as part and parcel of the feudal system planted in

New France by Louis XIV. During this king's reign, tracts of land were granted to seigneurs under certain conditions. The principal conditions were that the seigneur should, in his turn, make grants of land to settlers, who became proprietors of the concession and could dispose of the same. The price of sale was an annual rent of a *sou* or a *sou* and a half per *arpent*. This was called the *cens et rente*. This system exists to this day in many places, but the owner of any farm can rid himself of it by paying the capital of such rent. The great difference between our land system and the tenure of most European countries lay in this: that the Canadian settler was the proprietor of his farm, and could dispose of it by lease or sale. The feature of the tenure to which people objected was the *droit de lods et ventes*, a tax which the owner of a farm had to pay to the landlord if he sold it, that duty amounting to 9 per cent. of the sale price. The *lods et ventes* interfered with land transfers and led to many abuses; the vendor would sometimes ostensibly undersell his property, which the seigneur could then buy himself if he considered the sale price below the real value of the property. There was also the *banalité*, under which the seigneur was obliged to keep up a grist mill to which the *censitaire* was compelled to bring his grain. Under an act of parliament passed in 1854, a commission was entrusted with the task of amending this old tenure. As a matter of course the seigneurs were indem-

nified for their losses. All that remains now of the tenure is the rent of a *sou* per *arpent*; the *censitaire* can liberate himself by paying the capital of this rent, computed at 6 per cent.

A man of broad mind like Cartier could not overlook the important interests of education. He gave the subject his attention for several years and had the education act amended so as to insure the success of popular as well as of superior education. It was he that placed at the head of the system Mr. Chauveau, a man whose bright intelligence and whose literary attainments fitted him to carry out Cartier's views with success. In this reorganization of public instruction, he gave the Protestants of Lower Canada full control of their schools. At the time of confederation, the English population of Lower Canada had conceived a certain anxiety lest changes should be made in the law affecting their educational establishment when they should come under the parliament at Quebec, where a majority of Catholics would be entrusted with the making of the laws. Of course the British North America Act provided that they should have the same rights as the Catholics of Ontario had under the school system which obtained in that province; but a law had to be made in Quebec to carry out the special clauses of the constitution referring to schools. Cartier pledged himself that this would be done, and relying on his word the Protestants were reassured. After confederation the

Quebec government, through some misunderstanding with the corporation of Montreal, did not at once carry out the engagement made by Cartier, and loud complaints were heard among Protestants on all sides, both in the press and in parliament. Cartier then pressed the Quebec government to enact the desired law, with a prompt and gratifying result. When he returned from England in 1871, he was presented with addresses by the Protestants of Lower Canada, the object of which was to thank him for having carried out his promises with so much zeal. It is to be remarked here that but few French Canadian ministers have ever enjoyed to the same extent as Cartier the confidence of the English-speaking population of Canada.

In the administration of justice he made a reform which has lost, with time, some of its merit. Up to 1857 legal business was concentrated in the cities, to the great inconvenience of people living in the country, who had to travel great distances to attend the courts. Cartier established fifteen new judicial districts, so as to place law courts within easy reach of the people. It was his intention also to have the judges reside in their districts, so that they might form in different parts of Canada enlightened centres, which would improve the social condition of the inhabitants. Unfortunately most of the judges have not shared his views in the matter, and have made their residence in the cities. To complete this reorganization, he decided that all

the French laws, scattered in many antiquated books, should be codified after the style of the *Code Napoléon*. In this action he had another object in view beyond mere convenience. He desired to facilitate the study of French laws for the population of the Eastern Townships and those parts of the country to which the French laws had been extended. This reform he carried, as he stated in Sherbrooke, against the opposition of very many lawyers and even judges. It was, indeed, a beneficial reform, and any one conversant with our civil courts cannot to-day understand why any opposition should have been made to Cartier's codification scheme.

Another measure which his skill and energy carried through parliament is the act giving civil status to parishes established by the bishops. According to this act, whenever the Church thinks fit to establish a new parish in any diocese, it receives civil life without having to go before parliament to obtain an act of incorporation. This piece of legislation was of great benefit to the Catholics. It substituted a simple petition to the courts for the former act of parliament. It is strange that no one has ever given Cartier credit for this law which completes the liberties of the Catholic Church in Lower Canada and its independence of the state. Cartier was very proud of the measure, and considered that in having placed it on the statute book he had rendered invaluable service to the

Church; but he took no trouble to claim credit for it at the time, as such a law might have awakened prejudices. His object was always to do good rather than gain popularity.

Huxley once said of Gladstone: "Here is a man with the greatest intellect in Europe, and yet he debases it by simply following majorities of the crowd." Without stopping to inquire whether this judgment is exaggerated or not, it can be said that such a charge could not be laid against Cartier. Of all Canadians he was the most independent of public opinion. When a plan or a scheme, however risky, politically speaking, it might be, had been fully matured in his mind, he carried it out inflexibly. The judiciary act and the consolidation of French laws were carried against very powerful opposition, as we have just stated. It was his wont not to consult his friends on measures of great importance before they were brought forward for public discussion. Even confederation was resolved upon without the advice of his followers. Being asked one day if he had sought their opinion before forming an alliance with Brown, the arch-enemy of Lower Canada, he made the following astounding confession: "With regard to this matter, I have not sought the advice of my countrymen nor of my political friends. I here confess that in all important acts of my life, of my political career, I have not consulted anyone."

Strange as this conduct may appear, is it not the correct method for responsible ministers to adopt?

Members of parliament, men of conflicting views, many living only with the idea of preparing for the next election, and on that account dreading questions involving great issues easily misunderstood by the people, can only be made to accept average opinions if consulted. It behooves leaders of men to bring them, all at once, face to face with a proposal of high import, and compel them to support it whether it corresponds with their ideas or not. It is not unlikely that Cartier felt the pulse of the country, made inquiries as to its requirements, and after full study made up his mind, well persuaded that he knew better than the rest of the world what reform was needed.

With his self-confidence he thought very little of the party rank and file. When told that he seemed to have a certain fondness for inferior men as his followers in the House: "What does it matter," he replied, "as long as the head is good?" This would indicate that his opinion of his supporters bordered almost on contempt. Cartier lived in an age of restricted suffrage; he derived his strength from the better class of the population that trusted him entirely, but his methods would not suit a democracy and its representatives. Be that as it may, it cannot be gainsaid that the work he performed was great and far-reaching. It bears evidence that he was a man of great powers, and that with constant and hard labour, his achievements were considerable.

CHAPTER V

TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION

POLITICAL troubles such as Canada went through about 1837 and after the union, when the battle for responsible government had to be fought, stand, as a rule, in the way of material progress. Our country was slow to recover from their consequences, and from 1840 to 1854, trade was depressed to a discouraging extent. We were at a standstill while our neighbours, whose condition always affects ours, were rushing forward at rapid strides in all the avenues leading to prosperity. In 1843 trade began to revive under the beneficial legislation of Stanley, whose Canada Corn Act (1843) admitted into England at a nominal duty, not only the wheat grown north of the line 45°, but also flour made out of American wheat. The premium thus offered to our industry caused a large amount of capital to be invested in flour mills, but scarcely had they been completed when Peel's great free trade measure (1846) swept away all the privilege the colony was preparing to enjoy under the previous act, and this brought upon Canada, especially the western section, a crushing blow to rising prosperity. Discontent naturally followed and obtained to such an extent

that it alarmed Lord Elgin. He wrote to Lord Grey: "I believe that the conviction that they would be better off if they were annexed is almost universal among the commercial classes at present."[1] Another most objectionable piece of legislation, were the English navigation laws which cramped the commerce of Canada by restricting it to British vessels, whilst high duties transferred trade to the United States.

It was this stagnation in every branch of activity on the one side, compared with progress on the other, that fostered the annexationist sentiment which prevailed for a while about 1849, and which such eminent men as J. J. C. Abbott and L. H.

[1] It will be interesting in this connection to read what Lord Elgin wrote to Lord Grey on the state of the country in 1849.

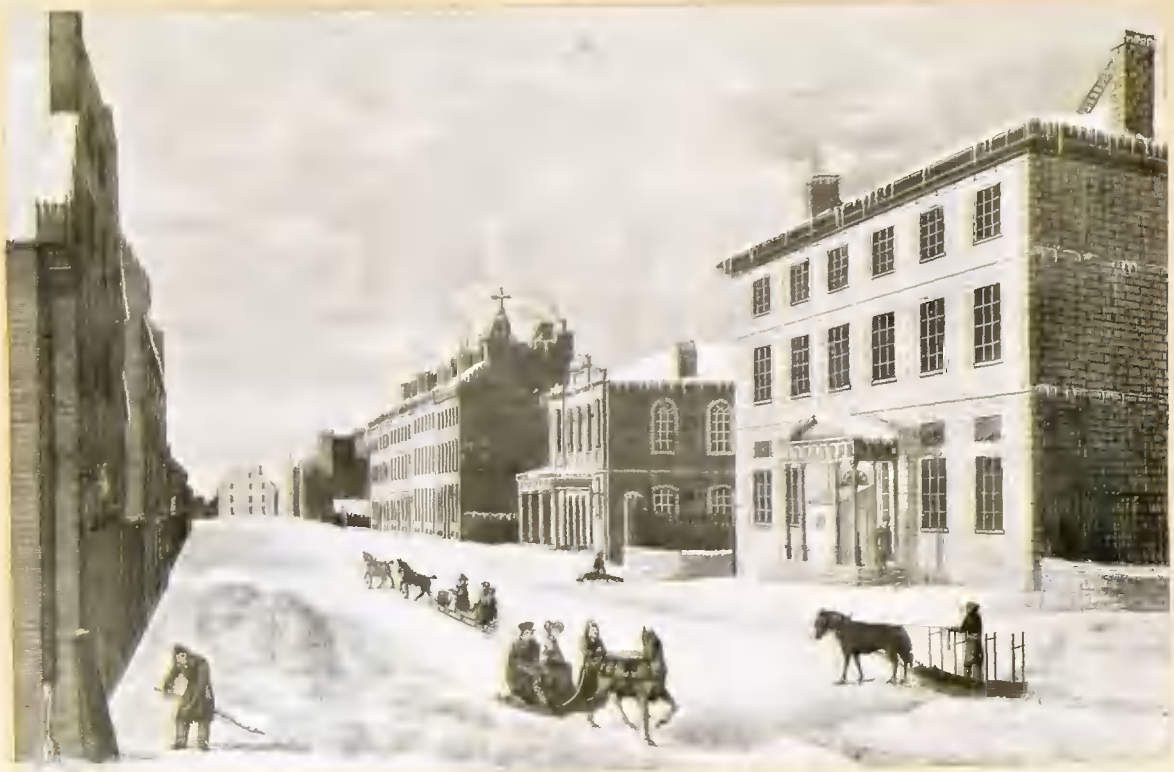
"Peel's bill of 1846 drives the whole of the produce down the New York channels of communication, destroying the revenue which Canada expected to derive from canal duties, and ruining at once mill owners, forwarders, and merchants. . . . . We are actually reduced to the disagreeable necessity of paying all public officers, from the governor-general downwards, in debentures, which are not exchangeable at par. What makes it more serious is that all the prosperity of which Canada is thus robbed is transplanted to the other side of the lines, as if to make Canadians feel more bitterly how much kinder England is to the children who desert her, than to those who remain faithful. . . . . If England will not make the sacrifices which are absolutely necessary to put the colonists here in as good a position commercially as the citizens of the States—in order to which free navigation and reciprocal trade with the States are indispensable—if not only the organs of the league but those of the government and of the Peel party are always writing as if it were an admitted fact that colonies, and more especially Canada, are a burden, to be endured only because they cannot be got rid of; the end may be nearer at hand than we wot of."

Holton countenanced. They had lost faith in the resources of Canada and its institutions. It seemed to them that the only way to lift the country out of this slough of despond was to join its fortunes with the United States. Not such were Cartier's sentiments; with his buoyancy of spirit and his great foresight, he and his friends perceived the cause of the depression and its remedy; the obstacle to the growth of public wealth and the lever to remove it from the way. Stagnation reigned supreme then for the reasons just mentioned and also for want of rapid means of communication between the back country and the cities and between these and the markets of the world. How could Canada have access to them when shut off altogether from Europe and partly from the United States for eight months of the year? It was only in 1849 that the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railway (now a section of the Grand Trunk system) gave Montreal an access to the sea through Portland. As far back as 1846, Cartier was in the field advocating the construction of railways, and the deepening of the St. Lawrence channel in connection with a general improvement of our waterways. He worked in advance of his programme of later years which he condensed in these words: *Our policy is a policy of railways.* Henceforward, we shall find him taking a prominent, when not the first part, in all questions of transportation. He was not the man to take a despondent view of the situation. The possibilities

of Canada in the line of material progress, appeared to his practical mind as they actually were and are —boundless. It was only necessary to create great veins and arteries, to put in motion the rich blood that the country contained and to create prosperity under new conditions of progress. That was the part that railways and improved navigation were called upon to play.

On August 10th, 1846, the citizens of Montreal were assembled to take into consideration the advisability of subsidizing the Montreal and Portland Railroad. Among the speakers of the day was Cartier, whose terse reasoning, and whose mastery of the question won the day in spite of a strong opposition led on by such important men as Messrs. Nelson and Gibb. It is interesting to note to-day the line of arguments used on that occasion. They show how deeply versed he was in political economy, how familiar were the requirements of the country to him. His speech would not have looked antiquated during the great debates of recent years in the Commons on the transportation problem.

In this age of democracy the people have as many courtiers and flatterers as kings of old. It is an out-of-date notion to teach the masses their duties at the same time as their rights. Cartier, despising the art of the comedian, relying alone on the good sense of the public, would not stoop to modern methods to gain acquiescence in any of his plans. It was, therefore, not surprising to find him



From the John Ross Robertson collection

at this Montreal meeting handling the good but slow population of the city without gloves, railing at their inertia, reproving them for their want of ambition, which, to make it more apparent, he contrasted with the "feverish activity, the energy and spirit of enterprise of our neighbours." Some of the arguments used on that occasion might appear childish to-day, but we must not be unmindful of the fact that at the time he spoke some of his hearers were prejudiced as to the great usefulness of railways. He must, therefore, be excused if he told the Montreal audience "that every city that has had the advantage to become a railway terminus has seen the value of property doubled in a very short time, such as Buffalo, Newport and Boston." His arguments are more in harmony with modern notions when he gives Montreal this warning, "that her progress is dependent on her position as the head of navigation for the western trade; that the changes made in the corn laws are placing this trade in jeopardy, and that Montreal will not be able to hold it if she does not secure for herself the best means of transportation from the waters of the west to the ocean through our canals and railways." And on another occasion he added: "Montreal would be blind to her interests and would be the most backward city if she failed to accept the only means to bring back to herself that prosperity which is running away from her. It is her destiny to become the great shipping port of

the west. Without railways and canals she will let pass this golden opportunity."

In this question of material progress, Canada then offered an immense field to his energy and to the business ability, remarkable in a lawyer, which came to him by atavism, as he once said in Quebec, his ancestors having spent their lives in trade pursuits. The first railway enterprise he became connected with was the Grand Trunk. As long as any part of that great line, with its many ramifications, remained incomplete, his efforts to achieve its success were untiring. His zeal for this national enterprise was so great that it led many to believe that it was not disinterested; hence the numberless charges hurled against him in that connection. But they could not in any way diminish his activity, and when the Grand Trunk extended only over a few hundred miles, he prided himself in the House of Assembly in 1854, with having prepared the charter of that great highway: "I have been entrusted with the bill which has given life to the Grand Trunk, and I take more pride in that fact than in any other act of my life. Even to-day this railroad is the main cause of our prosperity. The Grand Trunk Railway company is giving work to 1,600 men, and has spent since 1852, £2,500,000."

The building of that road from the Atlantic shores to Chicago was in the general interests of Canada, but Cartier did not overlook the interests of his province, and, using his large influence

with the company, he prevailed upon them to push their line along the St. Lawrence from Quebec to Rivière du Loup. His success in the matter reached the importance of a great feat, as the company were averse to the extension of their route in that direction, as no prospect of getting a compensation for the outlay could be held out to them. But Cartier had laid down this principle, that if the government's policy was to subsidize railways with a view of promoting the general interests of Canada, it was only fair that regions contributing their share of such subsidies should also receive rail communication. With the help of Sir E. P. Taché, he carried his point. His useful work in connection with railway enterprises in the St. Lawrence region did not end here. When the question of locating the Intercolonial Railway arose in the Privy Council, the majority of the ministers were inclined to run the line from Rivière du Loup directly to St. John, by the shortest route, whilst Cartier favoured the longer one, following the river shore through Rimouski, Bonaventure and Gaspé. He defended his plan with arguments derived from Major Robinson's report, the imperial engineer, who had made a survey of the country with the object of finding the most favourable route for the interprovincial highway. He had come to the conclusion that for military reasons, the line should run as far as possible from the American frontier. As minister of militia, Cartier took the same view, with the

double desire of favouring three large constituencies of his province and securing the line of communication most useful for the defence of Canada. It was on this occasion that after a prolonged discussion, ending in a decided opposition to his plan, he left the council with the intimation that he would not return until his ultimatum had been accepted. Achilles-like, he remained eight days under his tent. Major Robinson's route was finally selected. Cartier well knew that in a crisis such as he had provoked there are men disposed to say everything rather than cause the downfall of the administration. It is then to Cartier's firm stand that the population of Rimouski, Bonaventure and Gaspé owe the 300 miles of railway which place them in communication with the civilized world all the year round.

The desire to create a military route after the Robinson plan did not alone actuate Cartier. There was also another powerful incentive to his conduct. The interests of this forlorn country, cut off from all markets during eight months of the year, appealed to his feeling, and he was bound to bring the worthy population of the lower St. Lawrence in contact with Quebec and Montreal. Had not the railway then been built on the route laid down by Major Robinson, there is no telling when their isolation would have come to an end, as that country seemed to offer limited inducement to investments. Cartier's name is therefore entitled to

the grateful remembrance of this region, to which he has been a public benefactor.

During the session of 1872, it was Cartier's glorious duty to engineer through the Commons the first charter of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The construction of this route was one of the terms of the union of British Columbia with Canada under the act of the previous session, which had also been presented by Cartier. After a spirited debate of several days, the Canadian Pacific Railway bill went through its different stages, and when the speaker proclaimed that it was finally passed, Cartier sprang to his feet, shouting amidst the cheers of the House: "*All aboard for the west!*" His enthusiasm was quite natural. The Canadian Pacific Railway charter securing the building of the western route was the crowning work of confederation; without it the union of the British provinces from ocean to ocean would not be a real and accomplished fact. The great territories and British Columbia were too distant from the heart of the country to receive any impulse from it. The Canadian Pacific Railway was necessary to bring about both the moral and material union so desirable. It was not Cartier's lot to go west, for his days were then numbered. All that now lay in store for him in connection with this great enterprise was endless troubles, ending in a terrible political catastrophe, whose final act he was not to behold.

Under the terms of the charter of 1871, the terminus of the transcontinental line was fixed at the south end of Lake Nipissing. It might be asked now why such a strange selection had been made. Election tactics sometimes compel public men to curious performances. The terminus was fixed at that out-of-the-way point because both Montreal and Toronto claimed it. Cartier explained to his friends, who urged upon him, in 1871, during the debate on the Canadian Pacific Railway bill, in view of his coming electoral contest of 1872, to declare that Montreal would receive the western trade over the proposed line: "We have been obliged to place the terminus far from your city and also from Toronto for political reasons, on account of the ambition of Toronto and Montreal. Now let both rivals build roads to Nipissing to try and get their share of the traffic. Of course you are bound to win in the race; traffic must come to the port nearest the European markets. It is of no use to attempt to place obstacles in the way of the natural flow of trade. But if I were to make the promise you consider necessary to ensure my re-election, I would injure Sir John's prospects in Ontario." The refusal of this pledge was used to full advantage in Montreal, and did considerable harm to Cartier in 1872. To place such facts before the public to-day is not to command esteem for the degree of enlightenment possessed by the public opinion of those earlier days.

Two competing companies had made bids to construct the road, the Allan company of Montreal and the Macpherson syndicate of Toronto, and they caused considerable worry to the government of the day. Efforts were made to merge the two organizations, but without success. Finally the government pronounced in favour of the Allan company. Then followed the darkest page in the history of Cartier, and one which must have saddened his last days. Sir Hugh Allan had been called upon by the government to subscribe large sums of money for the election of 1872. This leaked out through the indiscreet communications of Sir Hugh Allan to certain Americans, who gave the information to a member of the opposition. At the session of 1873, Lucius Seth Huntington rose in his place in the House, and on the responsibility of his seat in parliament undertook to prove that the Canadian Pacific Railway charter had been sold to Sir Hugh Allan, the consideration being a large electoral subscription. The charge was first referred to a committee of the House, then to a royal commission, who reported the evidence taken before them at a special session of parliament in October, 1873. Sir John Macdonald, who had been sustained at the winter session of 1872 by a majority of thirty-five votes, felt that during recess he had lost his control of the majority by reason of the damaging nature of the evidence produced, and resigned in anticipation of an adverse verdict of the House.

To condone such an offence against political morality as the acceptance of an electoral subscription to be used to carry a majority of constituencies was out of the question, and the House of Commons had no other honourable course open but to withdraw its confidence from the government. It is generally accepted that in all countries where government by party obtains, it is hard to avoid political methods which appeal to the selfish interests of men. As Earl Grey says: "A tendency to corruption, in that sense of the word, is the common evil of all free government." It is an offence difficult to bring to light, but when discovered it must be dealt with severely. As a rule, public opinion in Canada has shown itself disposed to take an indulgent view of contributions to election funds. And as an instance, five years after the Allan subscription, the Canadian electorate returned to power the men answerable for what was called the Pacific scandal.

CHAPTER VI

CONFEDERATION OF THE BRITISH PROVINCES

CONSIDERABLE as they had been, the other labours with which Cartier had been connected could not be compared in importance with the part he played in the building up of confederation. We find him here in an altogether new field, where the whole future of his country is at stake. To dispose of or to change the political status of a country is no mean enterprise, involving as it does such grave responsibilities. In breaking up the old union of 1841, to form a new compact, was not the French Canadian leader placing in jeopardy the privileges and rights conquered by his people during the preceding fifty years? Was he not giving up well-known and well-defended positions for unknown and uncertain ones? Such were the questions asked on all sides, when Lower Canada was made aware that for the fourth time since 1760, its constitution was to undergo a change. If the greater number of Canadian delegates who had been entrusted with the task of framing a new charter under which all the British provinces of North America would hereafter live, went into the Quebec conference with a light heart, it would not be so with Cartier. To the former, confederation involved no new

risks; it was only similar institutions in a wider sphere, whilst with Cartier, the question arose how the peculiar institutions of his compatriots should be secured in the proposed union. What would become of their laws and their system of education? It was proposed, it is true, to hedge their liberties with all possible guarantees, but had not experience demonstrated that constitutions borrow a great part of their value from the men entrusted with their operation?

In spite of the great responsibilities which were looming on the track of the proposed union, it was Cartier who first of all made it a live issue. It is true that as far back as 1836 such a scheme had been mooted by a few public men, but it had never, until 1858, been brought before the people of the country as a question upon which action could be taken. In that year, when premier of Canada, Cartier had placed the following announcement in the speech from the throne:

"I propose in the course of the recess to communicate with Her Majesty's government and with the governments of the sister colonies on another matter of very great importance. I am desirous of inviting them to discuss with us the principles upon which a bond of a federal character, uniting the provinces of North America, may perhaps hereafter be practicable."

In the summer following this session, Cartier, Galt and Rose went to England with a view

of obtaining the concurrence of the British government in the union scheme and their authority to consult the maritime provinces. The scheme, however, fell through because the public men of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick thought that the people of those provinces had not had time to consider the question.

In 1862, things in Canada were going from bad to worse and a dead-lock was a possibility of the near future. It was then that the scheme of confederation was revived. At the very outset of the negotiations, Cartier, bearing in mind his task with its full responsibilities, laid down this as the *sine qua non* of his acquiescence, that confederation should be established on the federal principle. His colleagues would have preferred a legislative union as a more simple and less expensive form of government.

"I have again and again stated in the House," said John A. Macdonald, on introducing the resolutions adopted at the Quebec conference, "that if practicable, I thought a legislative union would be preferable . . . . but on looking at the subject in the conference and discussing the matter as we did . . . . we found that such a system was impracticable. In the first place, it would not meet with the assent of the people of Lower Canada . . . there was as great a disinclination on the part of the Maritime Provinces to lose their individuality as separate political organizations." But there is no

doubt that in the case of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the objections were not insuperable, being matters of sentiment, while in Quebec conscience and national feeling were concerned. Speaking on this point, Cartier corroborated Macdonald's statement: "I know that many members in this House and a large number of persons in Upper Canada and in the Maritime Provinces, think that a legislative union would have suited the country better. My opinion is that one government only could not take charge in a useful manner of private and local interests of the different parts of the country." This view is certainly correct, although the federal form of government is the most difficult to work out, its success depending chiefly upon the moderation, common sense and intelligence of the people. When these requirements were put to the test in after years, they were sometimes found wanting. It can thus be said, in view of the above statements, that to Cartier we owe the form of our present government. In forcing his conviction in this matter on his colleagues he was impelled by a strong sense that the federal system alone could secure to Lower Canada its peculiar institutions, and also by the stern fact that his influence could not bring his countrymen to accept legislative union, which had proved a failure in the case of Lower and Upper Canada.

But was not the federal system a close imitation of the constitution of the United States which

Cartier had been wont to depict as so far inferior to the British charter? Cartier and Macdonald did their very best to wipe out that impression which was spreading during the progress of the discussion of the proposed British North America Bill, but they made artful explanations without giving satisfactory proof of their contention. Cartier held that the two instruments were different in this: that under the constitution of the United States the authority came from the people, after the formula *e pluribus unum,* and the different states gave power to the central government, but with us, life was derived from the crown which lent activity to the central government and also delegated it to the provincial administrations, the authority in this case being derived from one common spring of honour and force—*ab uno plures.* Here we are in the midst of fictions and the argument does not stand the test of a very close examination. It is a distinction with no real difference. Thrusting sophistries aside, we have in Canada and in the United States authority derived from the people. It is they who framed the constitution and who gave it life; in Canada it remained for the crown to set the machine in motion. But even this power has hardly a real existence, so democratic have our institutions become.

According to Macdonald, it was the aim of the fathers of the constitution, to form a strong central government. "In framing the constitution, care had

been taken to avoid the mistake and weakness of the United States system, the primary error of which was the reservation to the different states of all the powers not delegated to the general government. We must reverse the process by establishing a strong central government, to which shall belong all powers not specially conferred on the provinces." Time and events have made clear that the authors of the constitution have failed to carry out their intention. No one will gainsay the assertion that the American federal power emerged from the war of secession, having crushed state pretentions, much stronger than the Canadian federal government could ever expect to be, especially after having failed in a contest with the weakest province of the Dominion, over the Manitoba school difficulty.

It is curious to note here how the two foremost authors of confederation unconsciously followed the natural tendency of their minds, perhaps under the pressure of diverging or conflicting interests. Cartier, never unmindful of the great responsibilities which the peculiar situation of his countrymen made him assume, exalted the rights of the provincial administrations as being of paramount importance. The autonomy of local government involved within its precincts all that was held dear by his countrymen.

When the different states which had separated from England were called upon to give up a certain

share of their autonomy to invest a central government with great powers, a conflict of views arose amongst their public men on that point. Some favoured a large concentration of authority whilst others desired to retain as much independence as possible in the state organizations. The former were misnamed federalists and their opponents anti-federalists, or republicans. Macdonald's notions were not unlike those of Hamilton, Jay and Madison, the friends of centralization, whilst Cartier was of President Jefferson's cast of mind, who, on assuming office, announced as his policy "the support of the states' governments in all their rights as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns."

Has not the operation of our institutions during the last thirty years shown that whenever a difficulty about federal and provincial rights occurred between the Dominion and the local governments, the latter has carried the day in spite of the central power, and almost in defiance of its order? Take for instance the Ontario Rivers and Streams Act, which the Dominion disallowed and which the Ontario legislature re-enacted. The small province of Manitoba took the same stand in the matter of her railway legislation. It is within the recollection of everyone that the Dominion cabinet, although persuaded that the Manitoba School Act of 1871 was *ultra vires*, did not dare to veto that measure for the obvious reason that Dominion

interference would not have been accepted, and that if the act had been disallowed it would have been placed again by the Manitoba legislature upon the statute book. Another cause of recalcitrant provincialism occurred when the Dominion government issued their remedial order to Manitoba, which was so ostentatiously disobeyed. All this goes to prove that the strong central government which Macdonald intended to establish at Ottawa very often stands powerless in the face of even the smallest province, and it also shows one of the weak points of all federation: the want of coercive power.

Confederation did not give all that was expected and that was promised for it. It is not the privilege of great men to foresee all the consequences of their best laid plans; even genius is often found deficient in foresight. But, taken altogether, it has been a great success, and, as far as the province of Quebec is concerned, a decided improvement on the régime which it superseded. This latter was a legislative union under which the religious and the racial interests were secured only by equality of representation between the two provinces, and that safeguard would have been removed if party lines had given way to national antagonism. As population increased more rapidly in the western province than in the eastern, equality of representation was doomed to disappear in time, for representation by population, just in itself, was bound to prevail, carrying with it the domina-

tion of Upper Canada over Lower Canada, which would have placed the French Canadians at the tender mercies of a hostile majority. The great benefit of the federal union resided in this, that it constituted the province of Quebec like an impregnable fortress in the midst of the other provinces. There were safely ensconced all that the French Canadians held dear. To the federal government were abandoned the material interests of the country which could not be disassociated and over which Quebec could still exert its share of control through representatives at Ottawa. It cannot be denied that under confederation the advance of Canada in all branches of trade and in public wealth has gone beyond all expectations. It can stand comparison with the most prosperous country of the world, the United States. It is sufficient to prove this that the volume of our trade had increased from seventy-three millions in 1868 to nearly three hundred millions in 1891. It would be fortunate indeed were there reason to believe that similar progress, or some approach to it, had taken place in the intellectual condition of our people.

The battle over the confederation scheme in Lower Canada was fierce and long. Cartier had to deal with clever and strong opponents, who, however, in condemning confederation, did not show how otherwise the country could have been rescued from its long-standing troubles and the dead-

lock which was near at hand between Lower and Upper Canada, with antagonism always on the increase. A sort of zollverein was suggested, but in such a vague and unprecise form that nobody could see what remedy it would have brought to cure existing evils. Some critics hinted that it was Cartier's duty to revert to the state of things which existed before the union of 1840, forgetting that the English of Lower Canada could never have accepted a French parliament and isolation from the other provinces. He was also blamed for taking a part at all in the federal scheme. This would have been a suicidal policy, for any changes evolved at the time without the concurrence of the French element would have been more or less against their interests. Lower Canada was placed between confederation and annexation to the United States. The French Canadians were, however, strongly opposed to the alternative, as any union with the Americans portended their absorption through the irresistible power of fusion dominant in the United States. It must be remembered that Cartier and his friends had not a free hand in this matter, that the opinions of English-speaking Canadians had to be taken into account, and that any schemes, to be accepted, must partake of the character of a compromise between the different sections of the country. After confederation, when the question had been finally decided by the people, the opponents of Cartier loyally laid down their arms and did their

best to make the new constitution a success. As it was their privilege and duty, they formed themselves into an opposition party in order to criticize the measures and policy of the government, with the lawful ambition to take their place at the helm. It is a happy country where public men confine their criticism to the administration of affairs, without assailing the constitution.

CHAPTER VII

CONFLICT AND VICTORIES

THE year 1867 saw Cartier at the climax of his glory and power. He was one of the delegation sent to London to watch the progress of the British North America Act through parliament. During his sojourn in the metropolis he was lionized, and had the honour of being the Queen's guest. People fond of contrasts could not help noticing the presence at Windsor Castle of the ex-rebel of 1837, now a stalwart supporter of British institutions. The contrast was not as glaring as some people would have it; the insurgent youth had been transformed into a loyal subject by the liberal policy of the government. When he returned to Canada in the summer to take his part in setting the new constitution in motion, he had practically no opposition in the electoral contest which followed the union proclamation. Both the local and federal elections returned large ministerial majorities. John A. Macdonald was called to form the first administration under the new régime as having the largest number of supporters. It was a reversal of the former state of things; from 1858 to 1862 Cartier was the premier of Canada. After the defeat of the Macdonald-Dorion administration in 1864, Cartier

was sent for, but he advised Lord Monck to entrust Sir E. P. Taché with the duty of forming a cabinet. He feared that his presence at the head of the government would injure the prospects of his friends in Upper Canada, as he had taken such an uncompromising stand against George Brown's aggressiveness. In spite of the change he was the real premier of the short-lived administration of 1864. In the Province of Quebec Mr. Chauveau was selected as premier; no better choice could have been made. Of sterling honour, and of very moderate views in politics, to which he had been a stranger since 1859, he was well fitted to open the new era which was to be at first one of peace and harmony.

Lower Canada acclaimed Cartier as a conqueror, and public demonstrations were organized in his honour in all leading cities and towns. In 1869 the government entrusted him and Hon. William McDougall with the mission of negotiating the purchase from the Hudson's Bay Company of their land in the North-West Territories. The negotiations were protracted on account of the exorbitant price placed on their rights by the possessors of those vast regions, who asked for them as much as $5,000,000. Finally, under great pressure at the hands of the colonial secretary, Lord Grey, they accepted £300,000. At a dinner given to our delegates, Mr. Gladstone, then prime minister, eulogized the Canadian statesmen. It was on this occasion that

Cartier used the expression for which he was so often taken to task by some of his opponents: "We French Canadians are British subjects like the others, but British subjects speaking French." These words, it seems, represent correctly the position of the French Canadians, and when other public men of the same nationality have pledged their loyalty to the British crown, have they not proclaimed themselves British subjects? Cartier's sentence is apt and to the point.

In the midst of these successes a terrible storm burst upon Canada. While the government was preparing to establish authority in the North-West, and before the annexation of these regions became a *fait accompli*, a party of engineers under Colonel Dennis had been sent to Fort Garry, and without a word of warning, and also without any leave from the Hudson's Bay Company, began to make surveys on the lands occupied by the half-breeds. These naturally took offence at what seemed to them high-handed proceedings. At first discontent remained inactive, then it flamed into open rebellion when Hon. Wm. McDougall attempted to enter the newly acquired territory as lieutenant-governor of the North-West. It would be unnecessary to dilate on what followed: Riel's revolt, the establishment of a provisional government, the murder of Scott, General Wolseley's expedition, and Bishop Taché's mission of peace to his people, who, at his earnest request, laid down their arms.

All these facts are well known but it will not be out of place to recall here the timely warning which was given by Bishop Taché of the trouble that was brewing, and which, if it had been heeded, would have spared the country a vast expenditure of money and the turmoil of a petty revolution. In 1869, the venerable prelate, a personal friend of Cartier, had come to Ottawa to warn the government that Colonel Dennis's action would cause mischief, and that the half-breeds were in a great state of agitation. The secretary of state refused to hear him. Cartier received the warning with indifference, and finally told him that he knew all that was going on, and that the agitation was not serious. The bishop insisted, and pointed to the signs of a coming storm, but to no avail. He then set out on his voyage to Rome, which he had hardly reached when a cablegram from the Canadian government begged him to return at once to Canada to appease the trouble. It was Cartier's boast that he was always better informed than everyone else, but in this instance he and his colleagues were singularly at fault.

Thanks to Bishop Taché's interference, the insurgent half-breeds laid down their arms and many of them went forward to welcome General Wolseley at the Lake of the Woods. Upon his return to England, the commander of the North-West expedition, striking the attitude of a conqueror, related his experience in Canada in *Blackwood's Magazine*,

abusing the minister of militia, whom he likened to Molière's *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, and belittling the Canadian volunteers and *voyageurs*, whose services he was, a few years after, anxious to secure for his Khartoum expedition.

During the session of 1871, the task of presenting the bill creating the Province of Manitoba devolved upon Cartier. He conducted the debates on this subject with his usual skill, and with mastery of all the details of the measure, prefacing his speech on the second reading of the bill with this remark: "The name of the new province will be Manitoba, a very euphonious word meaning: *The God that speaks.* Well, let Canada's latest addition always speak to the inhabitants of the North-West the language of reason, truth and justice." He did not live long enough to see how his good wishes were realized. Cartier, with his impulsive and generous nature and his extreme liberal ideas, presumed too greatly on the large-mindedness of others. Still in order to spare to Manitoba the troubles which were then agitating New Brunswick over a school difficulty, he went the length of surrounding the rights of the Catholics of Manitoba with all kinds of safeguards, to protect them against all possible encroachments. In New Brunswick, there was no law before confederation conferring upon Roman Catholics any rights to the separate schools which existed there only on sufferance. Therefore, the British North America Act,

which guaranteed the educational rights which minorities enjoyed before the passage of that act, could not be appealed to. In order to avoid any difficulty in Manitoba, Cartier inserted a clause which, to his mind would protect the cause of the minority against all possible attacks. He caused it to be enacted that all schools existing by law or practice previous to the union of Manitoba with Canada, would have the right to exist conjointly with other schools to be established hereafter, to share equally for their support in the distribution of public monies. We now know what a feeble rampart this was; it was blown down at the first word of a government opposed to separate schools, and the decision of these adverse legislators was supported by all the Manitoba courts whose judgment was, in turn, reversed by the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court. The findings of judges often look like the *obiter dicta* of laymen when laws are so diversely interpreted. The fate of this Manitoba law, so cleverly designed in Cartier's mind to defeat any attempt to deprive the Catholics of their schools, recalls O'Connell's opinion that he could drive a coach and four through any act of parliament. On the other hand, in view of this particular clause of the Manitoba Act, one is tempted to ponder this problem, whether it is better to have a defective constitution worked by liberal minded men or a perfect constitution applied by men wanting that spirit.

To sum up the whole matter it may be said that, in general, laws have but little force when they are met adversely by an overwhelming public opinion, and in this special instance, Cartier's measure, loyally conceived and carried out in the interest of contemporary Roman Catholics and their posterity to the furthest generation, was called upon to weather a storm of popular prejudice which it was powerless to withstand. It foundered, but the wreck remains to bear witness that Cartier and his colleagues were just in their day, and endeavoured to perpetuate justice.

The matter, however, that gave most concern to Cartier was the New Brunswick school embroglio. When, in 1871, the news spread that the Catholics of that province had been deprived of their system of separate schools which had existed up to that time, and previous to confederation, the press of Quebec at once took sides with the Catholics of New Brunswick. Without stopping to inquire what was the true legal position, the editors cried out that the minority was suffering persecution. Thus influenced, public opinion very soon followed in the same track and the government was at once importuned to interfere and protect the down-trodden minority. When parliament met in the winter of 1872, Messrs. Costigan, Anglin, and Renaud, brought up the grievance of their New Brunswick friends and protested against the proposed change which denied to the Catholics any share of the

educational fund so long as their schools remained sectional. They requested the disallowance of the obnoxious law; but the government resisted that request on the ground that educational legislation was vested solely in the provincial legislature; that although sympathy went out towards the aggrieved citizens of that province, it was out of the question to advise the governor-general to veto the act. It was set forth by Sir John A. Macdonald, to make the situation clear, that when the confederation scheme was under discussion, an attempt had been made to place education under federal control, which attempt the delegates from Quebec had entirely objected to, going so far as to declare that they could not accept any scheme of union in which education would pass from provincial control. It was, however, decided that, in order to protect existing rights in Ontario and Quebec, an appeal should lie to the central government if these rights were interfered with by their respective local legislatures. The government was sustained in this position, and Cartier, feeling the great responsibility attached to his conduct in this matter, made a decided effort to convince his co-religionists how wrong they were in pressing the government to interfere. The members were of one mind with him, but outside of parliament the debate was waged between sentimental reasons and legal arguments and, with the masses, the latter seldom gain a victory. Cartier, with his usual vim and high

spirit, when he was seeking Lower Canada's concurrence, led the public to expect from confederation more than it could give as a protection to minorities. Had he not stated in the House at Quebec that any attempt upon the rights of the minorities would be visited by the interference of the federal power? "Is it possible to imagine that the general government or that the local administration would be guilty of arbitrary acts? What would be the consequence, supposing the latter should do any unjust action? Measures of this sort would certainly be repudiated by the majority of the people. It is not probable, therefore, that a minority will ever be deprived of its rights. Under this system of federation which places in the hands of the central government all matters of general interest, and to whom question of races will be indifferent, religious or national rights will not be ignored."

When confronted with the stern fact of the New Brunswick grievance, he took another stand, the only one justifiable in law, but not expected by his fellow-religionists of Quebec. After having demonstrated in the clearest manner possible that disallowance was not in this case within the province of the central power, he appealed to the egotism and self-interest of the French Canadians, who, of all the peoples united in confederation, should be the last to ask for federal interference in local affairs. It was altogether contrary to the mainten-

ance of their autonomy to create a precedent which might be used against them later on. It was simply setting before the Protestant minority of Quebec an example which they might imitate if any measure passed by the Quebec legislature caused discontent among them. Certainly all this was sound advice, and went far to strengthen the provincial rights, but at the time it did not convince very many. Of course his sympathies, like those of Sir John Macdonald, went openly with the aggrieved, but he gave them to understand that they had in their own hands the means of obtaining redress. They were an important minority, and if, with united efforts, they persisted in claiming their rights, these would, before long, be conceded to them. The government was sustained in this course, and Cartier's suggestion that the opinion of the law officers of the crown in England be obtained on the contention of the Catholics was accepted. With this ended Cartier's parliamentary connection with the matter, but the agitation waxed terribly strong against him in Quebec. Scarcely anything else was discussed in the electoral campaign of 1872; great questions like the tariff, protection to native industries, the Canadian Pacific Railway—questions of vast import to the advancement of the country—were scarcely mentioned. Matters of sentiment always take the lead in the Province of Quebec, and become the all-absorbing topics of the day.

Let us give the sequel of that unfortunate

incident, in order to draw from it a valuable moral lesson. It was again brought up at the session of 1873, when Mr. Costigan, not being satisfied with the decision adverse to his views given by the law officers of the crown in England, again asked for the disallowance of the obnoxious legislation. He carried his point against the power of the government. All the Catholic members of Quebec save four, two of whom were ministers, voted for the Costigan motion; many did so reluctantly, simply obeying the dictates of public opinion and of the clergy, but thinking probably in their own minds that they were pursuing a dangerous course. When the Liberals came into power another effort was made to obtain redress of the long standing grievance; but the new administration was averse to anything which would look like high-handed proceedings. At the session of 1874, Mr. Costigan forced it again upon the attention of the Commons, with the help of the Quebec Conservatives, who, having suffered so much at the hands of their opponents from the agitation raised by this controversy, were bound now to use it against them to the fullest extent. The object of the new Costigan motion was to have the constitution amended so as to secure to his co-religionists the privilege they claimed, and a violent debate ensued. Judge of the astonishment of the Quebec members, when the rumour became current that the bishop of New Brunswick had made a compromise with the local government by

which the Catholic children could receive, under certain conditions, religious instruction in the public schools. What offended the supporters of the Costigan motion was that the bishop allowed them to continue this long standing fight after he had brought the difficulty to an end, without giving them even a word of warning, and without consulting them, after all the trouble they had taken to obtain redress for his flock. The fact of the matter is that for nearly five years, all the energies of Quebec had gravitated around this New Brunswick local affair, to the exclusion of all other interests. It was inferred from this want of consideration that this active and sympathetic support was little appreciated when the need for it had passed. The Quebec friends of the New Brunswick Catholics seemed then to have played a rather Quixotic part in this battle for redress of other people's grievances. They received an unmerited lesson, but one which was lost upon them. They were again found on several occasions to be more Catholic than the Pope and more aggrieved than the real sufferer of the wrong.

CHAPTER VIII

CARTIER AND THE CHURCH

WHILST Cartier was at the summit of his very successful career, during the period extending from 1867 to 1872, influences were at work undermining his popularity and preparing his downfall. It is a sad truth that most statesmen lose their hold on the people when they have the helm in hand; the act of governing diminishes popularity even when public affairs are properly conducted. For some reason or other, during these years, Cartier was not in touch with his friends as he used to be. His presence in the local House at Quebec during the first parliament of that province, and his many absorbing public duties at Ottawa left him very little time to devote to those attentions which a leader of men must bestow on his followers in order to keep his popularity. His party was very strong, and the very strength of a political association may become a danger; when there is no enemy to fight outside the camp the army of the faithful fight within the camp. In this case the danger sprang from among the most advanced Conservatives of his following, those whom Protestants called Ultramontanes, and loyal Conservatives nicknamed *Castors*.

The first cause of the split in the ranks of Cartier's followers dates back to ante-confederation days, and arose in this way. The then Bishop of Montreal, Mgr. Bourget, a prelate renowned for his great virtues, but absolute and obstinate, and not unlike Cartier in temperament, decided one day to divide into several parishes the only existing Montreal parish of Notre Dame, administered by *les Messieurs du Séminaire de St. Sulpice.* The Seminary refused to comply with the order, contending that from the early days of the colony under French régime, they had had charge of this parish, having built all the churches of the city, and that, according to the civil and religious law they could not be disturbed. The bishop pointed out the great inconvenience resulting from the concentration of all religious affairs in the one church of Notre Dame, such as christenings, marriages and services for the dead. Endless wranglings took place between the contending parties at Rome and before the civil courts, and it was an unfortunate incident that placed the Seminary's case in the hands of Cartier's law partners. He took no part in the discussion before the courts, but his name appeared with those of the other members of his firm, to whom public duties made him almost a stranger. It was supposed that his leanings were towards the Sulpicians with whom he had always been on terms of amity since his school days. From this cause a certain coldness arose between him and the head of the church in

Montreal, so that when confederation was proclaimed, all the bishops of the province, save Mgr. Bourget, wrote pastoral letters recommending to their flocks the acceptance of the new order of things.

After the Union, events occurred which supplied those Conservatives who did not approve of Cartier's attitude towards the head of the church in Montreal, with an opportunity of showing their dissatisfaction. A newspaper, *Le Nouveau Monde*, edited by Canon Lamarche, one of Mgr. Bourget's friends, was started for that purpose, and the government's actions in New Brunswick and Manitoba were severely animadverted upon.

The *Civil Code*, one of Cartier's titles to glory, was held up to severe criticism as containing legislation restraining the liberty of the church in matters of education, marriage and establishment of parishes. This Code reeking, according to *Le Nouveau Monde*, with what remained in Canada of gallicanism, was at last referred to Rome. The judgment came, after strict examination, that it was the most carefully prepared set of laws existing in any country, and that a few slight amendments would place it above reproach, and that the condemnation passed upon it in Quebec, in such unmeasured language, was unjustifiable.

Not satisfied with the damaging attacks directed against Cartier by the *Nouveau Monde*, the ultras organized a faction within the Conservative ranks

under the name of *Le Parti Catholique*, the avowed object of which was to place members of parliament under the dictates of the church in all matters political and religious. The leaders of *Le Parti Catholique* requested the Catholics to vote at the coming elections of 1872, for those candidates only who would subscribe "entire and full acceptance of the Catholic and Roman doctrines in religion, politics and social economy."

It is useless to point out the dangerous character of such an organization in a mixed community like ours, and also its lack of a *raison d'être*, for never had the Catholic members, both Liberal and Conservative, been more in harmony with the Church than in those days. On the New Brunswick school question, when the point arose whether the British North America Act should not be amended so as to remove the grievance complained of by the Catholics, all the Conservative members, save two, voted in the affirmative against their leader. The hostility of the *Nouveau Monde*, disguised at first and then open, did more to destroy Cartier's prestige and influence than the opposition of the Liberal party.

The *Programme Catholique*, the work of some journalists and of a few priests, launched without the consent of the upper clergy, drew upon itself the disapproval of the head of the church in Canada. The archbishop of Quebec, Mgr. Taschereau, ordered his priests to warn their flocks against

this ill-timed and ill-considered appeal to their sentiments. The *Parti Catholique*, which had given another illustration of the fact that some people can be more Catholic than the Pope, could hardly use its programme after this condemnation, but the spirit that dictated it was more alive than ever and kept up the warfare against Cartier with its accustomed bitterness. On the other hand, the regular and natural opponents of the government had greatly altered their platform; it was no more the aggressive and radical organization of old. Respectful of all the tenets of the church, they had eschewed all principles that could give offence to the clergy. Nay, in the New Brunswick affair, their conduct in the House of Commons constituted a series of pledges to the church; it must be, however, remarked that this submission harmonized well with their general opposition tactics. In 1872, the *Parti National* was organized to show that the Liberal party had broken off entirely with radicalism. Their programme, as was shown above, told the country that they intended in future to fight the Conservatives on purely political grounds. With great skill they were turning to their advantage Cartier's false position towards the head of the church in Montreal.

The Duc de Broglie was once conversing with Louis Philippe on the topic of the relations between the civil power and the church. "Trust to my experience, sire," said the statesman, "never meddle

in religious affairs, never quarrel with the church. In troubles of this kind, the civil power is sure to get the applause of all the good-for-nothing fellows in the country and to array against itself all the good souls and all right-thinking men." "Yes," replied the king, "it is like placing one's finger between the tree and the bark; it is not only pinched, but it remains there." The lesson conveyed above cannot be wholly applied to Cartier, for the quarrel was not directly with him, but still he should have avoided even the appearance of taking sides with any of the contending parties. Finally the bishop of Montreal gained his point to the advantage of the public. It was a matter of surprise to see Cartier, the autocrat, the upholder of authority, standing with the opposition to the bishop's order and giving it a sort of moral support.

At last, the consequence of this want of his usual foresight, or as some would call it, his great moral courage, recoiled on him with a terrible shock. He was badly beaten in Montreal East to the general surprise. His defeat was a crushing one, his opponent, Mr. Jetté, heading the polls by a majority of over 1,200 in a constituency of 7,000 voters. This unexpected accident aroused general sympathy even among Liberal papers who expressed the desire that another seat should be found for him. Even Mgr. Bourget and the Superior of the Seminary, called on him to express their regret at the result of the election. Similar marks of esteem were shown by

the bishops of Ottawa, St. Hyacinthe and Quebec. The unfortunate leader faced his overthrow with courage and seemed undaunted—at least in the public utterances on his defeat. But at heart, he must have been galled by it. To intimate friends he expressed his disappointment and complained bitterly of the attitude of some members of the clergy, who, he said, had forgotten all he had done for the liberty of the church in his province and for his country.

Cartier was then a very sick man, suffering from Bright's disease in an advanced stage. The writer, who accompanied him on the platform on nomination day, in Montreal, saw him unable to stand on his feet during the proceedings. When he rose to speak, his voice had agonizing tones. His very poor health, which must have had a depressing effect even on a man of such high spirit, his defeat, and the visible decline of his influence in Quebec, must have cast a gloom on his mind. Nothing is so entrancing and so fascinating as public life to the young. To raise one's self to the first rank by the sole force of talent; to rule one's country and achieve great things! It is a dream worthy of the highest. Ambition then spreads a thick veil, hiding from sight the deceptions and disillusions with which it often crushes its votaries. The worst feature of politics appears, not when a statesman has to face his natural enemies, but when he is betrayed by his friends. It is a more difficult task

to overcome the disgust engendered by unfaithfulness than to brave danger, especially when the all-conquering spirit of youth has vanished and when age has appeared, age without buoyancy, with but a backward vision upon past achievements and no hopeful outlook for great deeds to be done in the future.

CHAPTER IX

CARTIER AND THE MILITIA

DURING the American civil war, the intercourse between Great Britain and the United States was far from friendly, and at the time of the imbroglio called the "Trent affair" the situation became so ominous that it threatened war. Canada was hardly in a position to coöperate effectually with Great Britain if hostilities had broken out. It was felt then that a reorganization of the Canadian militia was an urgent necessity, and the government, with the help of a British officer, Colonel Lysons, prepared a Militia Bill which was presented to parliament at the session of 1862 by John A. Macdonald. The measure was defeated on its second reading, and Cartier, then premier, tendered his resignation. On that vote he had been left in a minority for the first time in his province, whilst his colleague, also for the first time, saw a majority of the western members standing at his side.

After confederation it was again his duty, as minister of militia, to prepare another reorganization of the defence of the country. His long experience in that part of the service, together with his strong sense of loyalty, fitted him well for the

task, and when the measure came before the House in 1868, it met with hardly any opposition. It is still the law of the land. Cauchon, of the *Journal de Québec,* who was never well disposed towards Cartier, praised him on his success. "The minister of militia," said he, "has succeeded where many expected to see him fall. He has nobly retrieved his fortune, and had his revenge for his defeat of 1862." *La Minerve* added: "All those present at the sitting of the House during which Mr. Cartier expounded his militia scheme are unanimous in saying that no other speech of his had ever carried more weight and authority. Nothing less could have been expected from the minister who is considered as master of the situation, thanks to the influence derived from his popularity in Lower Canada, and to the confidence which his integrity and honesty as a statesman give him in the other provinces."

The labour and careful study bestowed on the Militia Bill were inspired by Cartier's sense of duty to the country and strong attachment to British connection. This sentiment was the mainspring of his action where it affected the relations of Great Britain and Canada. It was in consequence of this state of mind that in 1868 and 1869 his feelings received a severe shock when a certain number of public men in England expressed the opinion that she should part with her colonies. The drift of the home government policy seemed then to set in

that direction, when they decided upon withdrawing the imperial troops from Canada. Even Sir John Young, on his arrival in Canada, at a public function in Quebec expressed sentiments on the question which were interpreted as an invitation to Canada to cut loose from colonial leading strings and declare her independence. On that occasion, July 15th, 1869, Sir John Young said: "At the present moment Canada is in reality independent. It has its own destinies in its own hands, and its statesmen and people are recognized as competent to judge of their interests as to what course to pursue to conciliate those interests. England looks to them for her guidance, and whatever their decision may be, either to continue the present connection or in due time and in the maturity of their growth to exchange it for some other form of alliance."

This warning of the governor-general was not the only indication at the time of the state of public opinion in England towards the colonies. Taken in connection with the withdrawal of British troops from Canada, was it not very significant? Whilst in Canada a great uneasiness was felt with regard to our imperial connection, which the great majority of the people desired to preserve, the *London Times* launched a terrible arraignment of the colonial system. It came in this wise: some Australian gentlemen, being in London, had complained of the indifference and neglect shown by

the government towards its dominions beyond the seas. To this complaint "The Thunderer" thus answered: "There is no ground for surprise, still less for indignation, if it be asked whether it would not be better for both Englishmen and Australians if the independence the latter have in fact should receive a name. The Dominion of Canada is in all respects independent. It is fitted to become—it has the institutions of—a great power. It is surely a fair subject for inquiry whether it might not assume its appropriate position. Although we do not forget our own warning against the use of metaphors, we must still ask whether the emancipation of the adult is not as desirable to complete the manhood of the son as it is necessary from the inability of the father to understand the peculiar circumstances of his son's life." In their complaint, these Australians, referred to in such snappish manner, spoke of England as the "mother country." This expression, which should at least have gone to the heart of the great organ, only drew ironical criticisms almost insulting to colonists. "Now," said *The Times*, "what is meant by speaking of England as the mother country? What is to be understood by the description of Australia, Canada, and the rest of her colonies? If all that is intended is to remind us of the historical fact that the citizens of Canada, New South Wales, and Victoria are mainly of English origin and descent, we shall not quarrel with the accuracy of the statement, although we

may doubt the pertinence of the phrases. England is in this sense the mother country of Australia, and just in the same way some other land—without committing ourselves to the quarrels of ethnologists, we may say Schleswig-Holstein—is the mother country of England. Again, it may be observed that if Australia be the child of England, the United States are elder brethren of the same family. It is evident that considerations like these, though extremely interesting in their proper relations, have no necessary connection with the mutual obligations of communities, that is to say, of societies of individuals banded together for purposes of government in different parts of the world. Let us then, in the interest of truth and right conclusions, discard altogether the phrase 'mother country' in the discussions which are before us; let us even use with deliberation words apparently so innocent as 'England' and 'colony,' and remember that what we are called upon to weigh and determine is the proper relations of Englishmen, Australians, and Canadians." To make the meaning clearer still or to leave no doubt on the mind of the dull colonial, who only too well understood *The Times'* utterances, this paper added: "Incidents like these (the withdrawal of troops and the speeches of public men), coming, too, in quick succession, showed that the executive government of the United Kingdom, acting, as must be presumed, in harmony with the imperial parliament, had resolved upon aban-

doning the old policy of tutelage, with its pretensions and responsibilities, and urging the colonies by gentle suasion to take up the freedom of their manhood."

Protests against such indications of the British policy came in rapid succession from Canada. Many public men took a despondent view of the situation, but not Cartier, who could never be found in a pessimistic frame of mind. Speaking at a banquet given to Hon. John Rose in Montreal, he strongly took *The Times* to task, and raised the hopes of his hearers. With a keen conception of the future, he predicted that this anti-colonial feeling in England, based on erroneous views of the best interests of the Empire would be of short duration, to make room for larger imperial ideas. Similar expressions were used by Cartier at several other public gatherings. To him, the interests of England and of Canada were so closely intermingled and dependent on each other that it would have been suicidal folly to have separated them. It was this feeling that actuated Cartier when in his despatch to the home government he strongly protested against the withdrawal of the British troops from Canada. Besides his great concern for the imperial prestige, there was another important motive to justify the protest—an imminent Fenian invasion of Canada. It was, he felt, a very abnormal act to order the English regiments from this land, when for the very hatred of England, the Fenians, indifferent to our affairs, had invaded Canada.

CONTRASTED OPINIONS

The description of public opinion in England thirty years ago placed in contrast with what it is to-day, is a subject for reflection. It shows how quickly men's minds travelled from one extreme to the other, and how unfair it is to blame current opinion, which is disagreeable to-day, but which may be acceptable to-morrow. Sentiments freely expressed in Great Britain when *The Times* advised the colonies to look for their independence, would sound like treasonable utterances now. Was it not also a fact worthy of notice that a French Canadian, once in arms against colonial misrule, appeared more British than British-born statesmen, imbued with loftier ideas of what was needed to increase the power and influence of Great Britain?

CHAPTER X

CARTIER AND LA FONTAINE

TO the historian with a philosophical turn of mind, to the ethnologist, the political history of the Province of Quebec is a most interesting study. He cannot help noticing a strong resemblance, proceeding from an affinity of origin, between the Norman barons, who wrested Magna Charta from King John, the men who fought for the prerogatives of parliament against the privilege of the crown under George III., and the Norman-Canadian statesmen who conquered responsible government. Their minds seem to have come out of the same mould, so much alike are they in sagacity, moderation, and the instinct for liberty. Their sense of what a colonial government should be showed itself at a very early stage of our history and with surprising clearness in men born from parents brought up under the personal power of Louis XV.

Under the despotic rule of Governor Craig, who suppressed *Le Canadien*, the first French newspaper of Quebec, Panet, Bédard and Taschereau claim the liberty of the press like Junius, and the independence of parliament after the style of Wilkes, and for their bold stand are sent to jail. When

Craig orders his minions to set Bédard free, again with English-like sense of honour and respect for law, he refuses to take advantage of the governor's order until he is told under what authority he has been imprisoned, and until he has been regularly tried.

About the same time the members of the assembly, discerning that their control of the provincial finances would surely check the absolute power of the executive, claim from the imperial parliament the burden of supporting the expenses of government by levying taxes. This is granted in 1818. Up to that year it rested with the colonial office to supply the money necessary to defray the civil list of Canada.

As far back as 1808, Bédard had asked for ministerial responsibility, which Lord Durham at a later time declared in his celebrated report, would put an end to the existing troubles. Then came Papineau whose advocacy of reform was admirable so long as he kept himself within the limits of constitutional agitation, before he became a desperate agitator under the exasperating sting of redress of grievances oft promised but always deferred. When the Union Act of 1840 was imposed on Lower Canada, La Fontaine entered his protest against it with all his fellow-citizens, but instead of sulking under his tent in permanent opposition, as some less far-seeing Canadians desired to do, he at once strove to bring forth good results from a well-

designed scheme to accomplish evil ends. This he achieved with the concurrence of that great reformer and good man, Robert Baldwin.

In the constitutional battle that ensued between Lord Sydenham and Lord Metcalfe on one side, and La Fontaine on the other, as to the meaning of ministerial responsibility, to an unprejudiced observer La Fontaine had the best of the argument. His opponent held views which would have been laughed out of discussion in England. Although the act of 1840 conceded ministerial responsibility to Canada, it was not the intention of these governors to grant it in its entirety. Even Lord John Russell was opposed to this reform, fearing that the advice which might be given to the representative of the crown in Canada would clash with the instructions from Downing street. Even as late as 1842, the *Montreal Gazette*, then a Tory organ of an antiquated type, denounced ministerial responsibility as a "pernicious and damnable heresy."

It was La Fontaine's and Baldwin's meritorious task to put an end to disputes on constitutional questions, and to that national antagonism which had arrayed one section of the population against the other. Party spirit has often been looked upon as the bane and curse of a country, but in Canada it has proved a blessing. When the Baldwin party joined the Liberal forces of Lower Canada under La Fontaine, to combat the Tory element, the dangerous strife of English against French began

to abate. Efforts have occasionally been made to revive old national feuds, but the sound sense of our leading statesmen, backed by the conservative instinct of the people at large, has prevented the return of that undisguised evil.

After the constitutional battle had been won, when Lord Elgin, the most enlightened and most popular governor of Canada before confederation, had gracefully helped to carry on responsible government, as they understand it in England, Cartier took the helm in hand. Intelligence and talent are the requisites for success in politics as well as in the other ventures of life, but they must be applied at the proper time, when their powers are specially needed. No one in Canada did more than Cartier to free the country from dangerous influences by keeping the government on party lines with French and English on both sides. In his collected speeches, delivered on public occasions either in Quebec, Ontario or the Maritime Provinces, reference is always made to the importance of maintaining harmonious intercourse between the different nationalities, of cultivating sentiments of mutual forbearance; in his mind it was the statesman's duty to avoid any cause of friction between these antagonistic elements.

It was his constant aim to spread among certain classes of the Upper Canadian population correct notions concerning the French Canadians. He was the first of his nationality to meet the western farmers

and make them feel that their unknown partners in the Union were not as black as they had been painted. The prejudices in Upper Canada, which he contributed largely to dispel, were so great about 1839, that the Toronto city council and the House of Assembly, as shown before, asked Governor Poulett Thomson to disenfranchise the French population of Lower Canada. Thanks to his liberal views Cartier ingratiated himself with the English and Protestant population of Lower Canada, whose confidence he never lost during his twenty-five years of public life. His conduct, which should be that of every Canadian statesman, was not always well understood among his countrymen and some of his opponents were pleased to represent him as an anglomaniac, with an excessive fondness for everything British. This reproach is, however, one of those stock-in-trade attacks made against almost every minister bent on giving equal justice to all, without regard to church or flag. For the good of the country these two Norman-Canadians, La Fontaine and Cartier, almost ruled it from 1841 to 1867, during that régime which had been designed for the very purpose of keeping them and their friends out of power. La Fontaine with all Lower Canada at his back, joined hands with the small Liberal following of Baldwin. When he retired to private life, at the advent of the Reformers in Upper Canada, under George Brown, Morin, Taché and Cartier at the head of the Lower Canada

Liberals, formed a new alliance with their old opponents, the Tories or Conservatives of the MacNab and Macdonald type. To sum up the part these two men played with their associates in our history, it may be said that La Fontaine with Baldwin fought and won the constitutional battle, whilst Cartier, with the help of Macdonald, contrived to establish the political union of the country, showing conclusively that in spite of the dissimilitudes of a mixed community, it can easily be governed and made prosperous.

Under the Cartier-Macdonald alliance, the country was again ruled by a party composed largely of Lower Canada members, thus giving the French leader a strong hold over the House. It was then that George Brown denounced what he was pleased to call the French domination, a war cry which would have been reasonable if Macdonald and Cartier could ever have been inspired by racial or religious prejudice, an hypothesis out of the question. The alliance of those two men was certainly beneficial to the country. After he had broken away—an early experience having shown him his initial error—from his first associations, John A. Macdonald aided his ally in removing existing prejudices in Upper Canada against the eastern province, and in establishing the principles which must govern public men in a community like ours composed of two separate and distinct races. Both, though differently gifted, were born

leaders of men, Cartier with his imperative ways and Macdonald with his power of persuasion and cunning. The latter had a deep view of the human heart, a greater contempt for its secret impulses, and knew what spring must be touched to influence it. Cartier claimed the leadership because from his own conception it belonged to him on account of his superior qualification. He was the necessary man and the only one. A long use of power and blind obedience from his followers had developed within his mind peculiar ideas as to his position. He exacted from his friends absolute submission and when confronted with the remarks from members of parliament that such and such votes were difficult to give, he would bluntly reply: "I want your support during stormy times; don't claim credit for supporting me when it is all plain sailing."

Macdonald led his men with a wink and a smile; he fascinated them with a tap on the shoulder and they were pleased to take the password from such a clever and skilled leader. Amiable as he was with the rank and file, he was absolute in council. One of his colleagues, a prominent politician, often told me that his rule was personal power to its full extent. This absoluteness of mind in Macdonald, and equally strong conviction in Cartier, often brought these two men into antagonism. They were pleased, when addressing the masses, to eulogize each other, to praise their friendship, to refer to the popular saying that they were Siamese twins,

but when looked at by the light of facts, this close amity has the character, to a great extent, of those numberless legends which makes Renan call history "that conjectural science." The truth is that numerous conflicts took place between them, and that the alliance was maintained only by mutual interests and a strong sense of public duty. The elements which made up their forces were so conflicting, so antagonistic, that they unavoidably fostered division between the leaders. Just imagine, Cartier whipping into line the most Catholic section of Lower Canada, and Macdonald supported by the Orange Order! It must have required no ordinary generalship on the part of these two men to marshal under one flag soldiers who rallied to symbols representing such antagonistic ideas.

It is generally believed that their most serious estrangement occurred in London, whilst the British North America Act was before parliament. John A. Macdonald desired, it is said, to have it modified so that a legislative union should be substituted for the proposed federation. To this, Cartier objected strongly and made no mystery of his intention to return to Canada, if his colleague persisted in his determination to alter the constitution as it was adopted in Quebec. It is also reported that he had warned the then Canadian premier, Sir N. F. Belleau, to be prepared to resign at a moment's notice, on receiving a cablegram to that effect. This statement has been given out without

contradiction, in the Quebec press, by a distinguished French journalist, Oscar Dunn, and also by a very intimate friend of Cartier, Louis Archambault, for several years a member of the Quebec government. A gentleman now on the staff of an important paper in Montreal and once his confidential adviser, confirmed this statement to the writer. In spite of these very respectable witnesses we would hesitate to credit it. How could Macdonald have broken his pledged word of honour, his solemn declaration in the House at Quebec, with the hope of being sustained on his return to Canada? Was he sure that even Ontario would have followed him, after having accepted confederation? Is it conceivable that after the labours and toils of three years, he would have thrown all results to the winds and begun anew to educate the people to another state of things? Still the evidence on the other side is very respectable and makes the solution difficult. *Et adhuc sub judice lis est.*

CHAPTER XI

CHARACTER AND POLICY

THE mental equipment of Cartier, combined with his moral qualities, served to fit him admirably for power. What men lack most in our age is that sterling endowment called character. Eloquent speakers and clever debaters are found in large numbers in the ranks of our talented politicians, but where is that firmness of mind, that unswerving integrity so necessary to those entrusted with great public functions? These requisite qualities had developed in Cartier to no ordinary degree, and enabled him to see his way clear and to hold the helm with no wavering hand. His earnestness of purpose, resting on the best information derived from conscientious examination of the matter to be acted upon, made him sure that the direction he gave to the ship was the best. Of this all his supporters were persuaded as well as himself.

He was also a man of quick resolves—procrastination did not suit his temper. It was a general belief at the time in Montreal that if it had been his task to lead the Conservative party during the Canadian Pacific Railway scandal, he would have forced a decision during the session in which the charge had been made when the government had a majority of

thirty-five votes. His friends put off the investigation for months, with the result that, under influences not counteracted by the presence of ministers, that majority dwindled to naught. Tactics and manœuvring were within his aptitudes, as was shown in 1862. Seeing that he had lost his hold on a large number of his supporters, he chose to be defeated on the Militia Bill, well knowing that his opponents would have to come before parliament with a plan for the reorganization of the militia, and a plan probably more open to criticism than the one they had condemned. His generalship and foresight in that crisis were both remarkable, for everything turned out as he had expected. As to his leadership in Lower Canada, his ideas were formulated to conserve the special interests of the French Canadians. It was his conviction that they would be endangered if his countrymen were about evenly divided between the two political parties. So it was his constant aim to concentrate their forces in a compact body. Fearing at one time that these would scatter, he tried the extreme, the desperate means of re-uniting under his command the Liberals and Conservatives. With this object in view, he offered Dorion a seat in the cabinet when he was called to form the administration of 1858. His proposal was declined, as Dorion would not forego his democratic principles. It is said that the Liberal leader was inclined to form a coalition, but that his lieutenants, Papin, Doutre, Dessaules,

and Laflamme, raised such a storm of protest that Dorion did not dare to follow his own inclination. It was also hinted at the time that Cartier's offer lacked sincerity—that he made it simply because he knew that it could not be accepted, for the purpose of throwing on Dorion the responsibility and odium of the French Canadian disunion. This is, however, only an hypothesis and a surmise wholly out of harmony with Cartier's mode of dealing with political affairs. Seeing the impossibility of uniting his countrymen through an alliance with his opponents, he made up his mind to achieve his end by destroying the Liberal party. In this he succeeded to a great extent.

A leader's qualifications are not made up alone of high intellectual powers. He must at times descend to the level of the average mortal, and exhibit qualities of a meaner order though of the utmost importance in the management of a party. Within the home circle, Cartier was genial and amiable. Brillat-Savarin, the great philosopher of gastronomy, remarks that when a man entertains a guest, he must never forget that he has the responsibility of making him happy as long as he is under his roof. Cartier's action was shaped after this doctrine. In his usual vocations his temper would at times break out in a storm of violent words, but the storm soon passed away. He affected a certain brusqueness in receiving persons who he feared would trespass on his time; he adopted these tactics to ward off bores

and to avoid the worries of solicitors. His frankness would at first displease those unacquainted with his peculiarities. For instance, if a young man requested his influence for a civil service appointment, the invariable answer would be this: "I have no situation to give. Besides, you should not ask for a favour of this kind. Do as I have done—work hard and you will succeed. Turn your attention towards another field. If you enter the civil service, in a few years dissatisfaction will be your lot." Still, if the applicant was better fitted for a public office than a law office or any other employment, he would send for him when vacancies in his department came under his disposal. It was not his policy to hold out promises which he was not sure to keep. True to his motto, he was always and everywhere *franc et sans dol.*

He was no orator, in the academic sense of the word, but a very effective debater, always convincing, drawing and retaining the attention of his hearers by the splendid array of his arguments. Of middle size, but of a strong frame, with an intelligent face and eyes full of fire, he gave the impression of a man of untiring energy and courage. Always in motion, pivoting on himself, gazing at his friends to infuse them with his burning enthusiasm, and then in turn at his opponents to challenge them to contradiction, he never failed to make a mark in debate. What gave his speeches an extraordinary effect over his supporters was the

overflowing optimism which he seemed to possess. To soar above his audience was never one of his characteristics. Facts and nothing but facts, well bound together and cemented with overpowering logic, constituted the bones, sinews, and flesh of Cartier's oratory. Figures of speech, all rhetorical ornaments, he despised, but pointed repartees formed part of his defense. He had little of what the French called *esprit*, but he appeared at times brim full of humour. The over-confidence in himself which he often displayed—his optimism—would at times amaze his audience or draw a smile to the lips of the sceptics in the House. Whilst he was delivering his speech on the confederation scheme, C. Dunkin, a member of the opposition, interrupted him to express his doubts as to the possibility of successfully carrying on the future government. "The man," he said, "who under such a system will succeed in leading the Commons for six different provinces, and also to keep up as many legislative councils and Houses of Assembly, would deserve to be sent to England to teach the political alphabet to Palmerston and Derby." Upon this remark the following dialogue ensued:

Cartier.—"This could easily be done."

Dunkin.—"The honourable minister never sees any difficulty in all he undertakes to do."

Cartier.—"And I have seldom failed. I have generally got the success I had desired."

Dunkin.—"Yes, under favourable circumstances,

but the honourable gentleman has also met with reverses. I believe in the omniscience of no one. It will be no easy task to meet the exigencies of race and religion with three provincial ministers."

Cartier.—"Hear! hear!"

Dunkin.—"The attorney-general thinks he would be able to overcome that difficulty."

Cartier.—"Certainly." (Laughter.)

Dunkin.—"Well, if the honourable gentleman succeeds in meeting the requests of Lower Canada with only three ministers of that province in the cabinet, he will prove that he is the cleverest man in the country."

On another occasion, after a very bold argument from Cartier in a certain debate, Mr. Wright, of the county of Ottawa, exclaimed: "*Semper audax*," and Cartier answered: "*Audaces fortuna juvat.*"

Speaking in 1872 in the House, on the Fenian invasion of Canada, he referred to certain criticisms that had been directed against the militia. Sir R. Cartwright, thinking the allusion referred to him, said that his remarks had only been pointed against some chiefs. Cartier replied: "Let the honourable gentleman attack me, and he will see how I can defend myself."

Cartwright. — "The honourable gentleman is plucky enough to undertake anything."

With this humour and these witty retorts was coupled an immense amount of general information on all matters pertaining to politics. His ambition

urged him to be always the best posted man in any discussion. Before confederation, when John A. Macdonald was not so thorough nor laborious in his methods as he became afterwards, it was Cartier's task to supply the deficiencies of his friend and of his other colleagues at all times. That knowledge he had acquired through incessant labour at the rate of fourteen hours a day during forty years of his life. His mind never had the brilliancy of Sir John's, but his industry and diligence, in the days referred to, were greater.

As to the peculiar tendency of his ideas, it can be said that they smacked of old style conservatism in principles, with great liberalism in action, when the material interests of the country were concerned. A man's ideas are more or less influenced or biased by his surroundings, by events occurring under his eyes. Cartier's conservatism was derived from his undisguised hatred of the French radicalism of 1848, which some of his opponents tried to transplant to Canada. His intense devotion to British connection, in which he saw the only means of maintaining the French nationality intact in North America, also contributed to turn his mind against all new fangled notions. At the noon-tide of his life he was also very much impressed by the great conflict going on in the sixties, south of Canada, which then threatened the unity of the great Republic.

It was the fault of the American constitution, according to his views, that the war of

secession had taken place; and that struggle supplied him with arguments demonstrating the superiority of the English institutions over those of our neighbours.

His speeches were replete with advice to his countrymen, which he repeated until it became tame and commonplace. They must, he told them, concentrate all their energies to rise to the requirements of the British constitution; they must be satisfied to live under the Union Jack and enjoy the great liberty it secures to their ambition to constitute a distinct nationality.

Another condition to their separate existence he was also fond of propounding: the importance of acquiring property. Speaking on the grave of Duvernay, the patriot agitator of 1837, he said: "Let us never forget that if we desire to maintain our national existence, we must cling to the soil. One and all of us must strive to hold our patrimonial territory. Number alone does not constitute a nation. Race, language, education and manners form what I would call the personal national element, which is doomed to perish if it is not supported by the territorial element. Experience shows that in order to ensure permanency and a lasting existence to any nation, the union of the individual with the land is absolutely required. . . . If in the future an attempt was made to destroy our nationality, what strength would not the French Canadians gather if they were firmly planted in the soil?

The giant Antæus of the fable used to draw a new supply of vitality whenever he touched the earth; the same result would happen with us." After referring to the peaceful rivalry which must exist between the different races in Canada, he added, "If the majestic maple tree is the king of our forest and is always to be found on the best soil, the French Canadians who place its emblematic leaf on their breasts must, like that tree, plant themselves in the best and most fertile land."

Property always inspired him with great respect. In his eyes it should be like a column in the state to prop up the constitution. It was his aim to place it as the first requisite for the right of suffrage, and as the basis of qualification for membership in the Upper House. In 1853 the legislative council was made an elective body. It had been up to that year composed of crown nominees. Cartier made a strong plea in favour of property qualifications for the members of that House. "A man," he said, "who acquires property by his labour and energy will take better care of public moneys than one who has spent his time dabbling in politics. Besides all constitutions which draw the youth of a country away from acquiring property and from industry are dangerous. Rising generations must be taught to earn money at home before taking part in politics." These pleas in favour of the possession of land were uttered when France was still trembling under the violent diatribes of the famous and

powerful communist writer, Proudhon, who said that "Property was robbery."

In politics, as in love and in war, for some people, everything is fair against an opponent or a rival. According to this convenient but immoral principle of conduct, some of Cartier's foes were pleased to represent him as afflicted with anglomania, to the extent of aiming at the anglification of his countrymen. Nothing could have been further from the truth than this remark. He, for a certain time, overlooked it, thinking it was beneath contempt, but when one day it was hurled at him in the House, he resented it bitterly, and turning to the member who had dared to make this charge, he said: "The honourable gentleman has even stated that it was my object to anglicize my countrymen. Well, if he ever occupies my present seat I hope he will place upon the statute book measures as favourable to them as those of which I am proud of being the author. Does he not know what a long struggle I had to bear in order to obtain the construction through Lower Canada of the Grand Trunk Railway, which now affords to my countrymen new facilities to increase their wealth, adds value to their land and opens fresh fields to colonization? Have I not, in 1855, given normal schools to Lower Canada, and opened 3,000 new common schools? Have I not restored the Jesuits' property to its primitive destination—education? Have I not introduced the French laws in the Eastern Town-

ships? Did anyone think before me of consolidating the *Coutume de Paris* into a civil code, which places within easy reach both of the English and French population, the laws of our province? Is not the law dividing the province into a large number of judiciary districts extremely beneficial both to the lawyers and the people? Was not the Seigniorial Act which suppressed the *lods et ventes* dues a desirable measure?"

To face such charges as those brought against Cartier is the common lot of all public men in a community like ours. They are in turn, and at the same time, charged with being too French or too English, too friendly to the Catholics or to the Protestants. When a statesman has nothing but these conflicting charges to combat, one may be sure that he is governing according to the general interests of the country. Methods of criticizing and making opposition are numerous and varied, whilst there is but one way to govern.

Cartier's ideas on political economy as bearing on Canada were not fixed; he does not seem to have inclined markedly to either free trade or protection, but stood midway between the extremes of the two economic creeds. On this ground, and on this only, he was an opportunist. "The manufacturers often ask," he said, one day, "to be protected to the utmost. This is an absurd demand, as absurd as the claims of the free traders. If we were to comply with the demands of the latter we would

be compelled to pay to the government through direct taxation the same amount that protection would give in an indirect manner. With unlimited protection, you would strike a terrible blow at our foreign trade. We shall not go in for such a suicidal policy. The government has decided to impose duties which will bring into the exchequer the revenue required for public service and afford to our industries a reasonable protection."

Political economy, that uncertain science containing so many high sounding doctrines at variance with their results in cold experience; political economy which one hundred years after Adam Smith has not yet formulated any accepted law for the development of wealth, could not suit an absolute mind like Cartier's. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that his ideas wavered between protection and free trade. In this only, did they show a tendency to oscillate. In other matters, he was absolute to an extreme; the principles of the British constitution, for example, as it has already been shown, were to him like dogmas. He never doubted for one moment that these institutions, in their *ensemble,* were the masterpiece of human ingenuity.

To quote Sir Wilfrid Laurier's opinion of Cartier: "What strikes one most in this complex nature, is that he takes hold of every question from the highest point of view. He has never been seen to shun any responsibility by appealing to popular

prejudices which always offer an easy retreat. In whatever situation he is placed he faces it boldly and nobly. It is curious to note here that however high and brave the conclusion he comes to, the grandeur of the subject never draws any inspiration from him. He always remains exclusively a man of action and a business man, without any bright thoughts or clever sentences. It is impossible to read his speeches, with their dullness of expression, without arriving at the conclusion that they come from a person whose political intelligence is of the highest order. Very few men have understood as well as he did the situation of the French race. Very few have had a clearer conception of the duties connected with that situation."

This firmness of conviction which characterized his views in politics followed him in the higher field of religion. Here he rose above the average men of his day and especially of his youth when rationalism had taken hold of not a few of his contemporaries. Voltaire, d'Alembert and Diderot were then much read and thought of in Lower Canada. Cartier never went out of his way to court the clergy, never made a show of his religious belief, but from boyhood, under family and afterwards school influence, he closely adhered to the tenets of that faith which seeks to elevate and offers cheering hopes beyond death.

Early influences often follow a man in after life, and explain, in many cases, his temperament and

general demeanour. It is noticeable in Cartier's career that the associations of his youth left their mark in his mind. The surroundings in which he was brought up were peculiar enough to impress him strongly. In those days, prior to the uprising of 1837, the country along the Richelieu river and in the more progressive parts of Lower Canada offered scenes of patriarchal life quite unknown anywhere else. It is still usual in the province to refer to that period as *le bon vieux temps* (the good old times). Then Lower Canada was a land of plenty, of cakes and honey, of constant merriment and enjoyment of the good things of life. If the *habitants* worked hard in summer from dawn until sunset, or, as one of them said to me in a poetical sentence, if he toiled *d'une étoile à l'autre*, that is, from the disappearance of the morning star to the rising of the evening star, his labours were amply rewarded at harvest time. He then saw his granaries full to overflowing of heavy sheaves and of all the products of the garden and farm. As soon as his rich crops lay secure in the barn, the bell would give the signal for feasts and amusement; and winter, the thoughts of whose hardships send a chill through foreigners, saw merry scenes. All Lower Canada was alive with a long succession of entertainments, dinners, parties and dances. The dinners—*fricots* as they were called—went the round of a parish, every guest at the first one given in the beginning of the winter being in duty

bound to return the compliment. And in the profusion of eatables they recalled the Rabelaisian feasts. The golden, roasted turkey kept company with the huge roast of pork, or *porc-frais à l'ail*, which the late chief justice of Quebec (Sir W. Johnston) looked upon as the masterpiece of the Canadian cuisine, and *ragoûts* of all descriptions loaded the table. It was the ambition of every housekeeper, who had a true sense of hospitality, to hide the table-cloth with all the delicacies which the country and her skill could supply. To that end every space between the plates and dishes was crowded with smaller plates, saucers filled with jellies, bon-bons, *crême brûlée*, and the like.

It was the writer's good luck to be present, in his younger days, at one of these repasts, and not since has he witnessed such joy, such open heartedness, and also such appetites. As the evening passed away in pleasure a demand for songs arose, and the local artists sang those which every one in the room knew to the last line. They were the rhymes called *chanson de ronde*, which the soldiers of the king of France sang through their campaigns from the east to the west of Canada, from the shores of Lake George to the banks of the Ohio, at Fort Duquesne and Ticonderoga. They are still familiar all over Quebec. The chorus of one of them lingers yet in my memory just as I heard it from the mouth of the singer, who after each stanza would turn to mine host and shout:

Bonhomme, bonhomme,
Tu n'es pas maître dans ta maison
Quand nous y sommes.[1]

Such festivities were not confined to the limits of the parish. These Canadians of old would exchange amenities with all the villages along the Richelieu river, from St. Ours to Chambly. Many and many gay drives did this river see after having witnessed in earlier days the plodding of Montcalm's soldiers on their way to the glorious battlefield of Carillon. The Richelieu was in olden times the highway between New France and the English colonies; and the route was also followed by the invaders of 1775 and 1812. Fortunately the Lenten season came at last to put a stop to these agreeable but rather expensive pastimes. It is true that in order not to break off too suddenly from this pleasure-making there was still the gathering in the woods around the cauldron of boiling maple sap, which afforded another great source of amusement.

St. Antoine, Cartier's birthplace, enjoyed great prosperity during the first half of the nineteenth century. Cartier stated in a speech at Quebec that his grandfather exported annually 500,000 bushels of wheat bought in that section of the country. He was a merchant, and the house in which he carried on his trade is still extant. It is well known about the country on account of its size, for it extends three

[1] "Old fellow, old fellow, you are not the lord of this house when we are here."

times the length of the other dwellings. It goes by the name of the *maison aux sept cheminées*, the house with seven chimneys. An explanation as to the necessity for such a large establishment affords details of some interest to persons not familiar with all the peculiarities of Lower Canada. One section of this long house was set apart for the family, another contained the storehouse and the remainder was intended to lodge *rentiers*. According to a long-standing custom, farmers or tradespeople who are growing old, enter into an agreement with a neighbour of some means in the parish, under which they give all their property to the latter in exchange for a life annuity (hence the title of *rentiers*). I have before me one of those *contrats de donation*, which enumerates all that the *rentier* is entitled to, from tobacco and snuff to an everlasting cow *(une vache qui ne meurt pas)*, and a merchantable hog *(un cochon marchand)*. These annuities cause trouble whenever the *rentier* succeeds in lingering beyond the day he is expected to die. The Cartiers seem to have made it a part of their business to enter upon these risks, to judge by the appointments of their house.

After reading the above sketchy description of the state of Lower Canada, the question naturally occurs: How can you account for the uprising of 1837, if the people were so happy in the "good old time"? The query is quite natural and must be answered. The troubles had an aristocratic, not

a popular origin. It was the best people of the country that rose in rebellion against the Château St. Louis: Papineau, Panet, Bédard, Bourdages and their friends, men of high culture, the real aristocracy, became exasperated in time at the contemptuous manner in which they were constantly treated. As to the *habitant*, he enjoyed religious liberty and exemption from taxation; he was satisfied with his lot and would not have moved if the red hot tirades of Papineau had not persuaded him that he had a grievance. Still this discontent was far from being general and deep-rooted, as the uprising confined to the region of Montreal has shown.

The surroundings in which Cartier's youth was spent, as already observed, had their influence on his mind, and contributed with the genial nature of his race to keep alive in his soul that high spirit which was so remarkable in his conduct all through life. Never was he found despondent; no situation, however dark, saw him without an outburst of wit or humour.

In social functions at home he was most entertaining. No guest ever left his house but happy and satisfied with his host. He was what the French call a *boute-en-train*, a person who will get out of every one the best that is in him. A lady musician —the wife of a Liberal senator—once told me that whenever she met Cartier at social functions, he would insist upon having her give a specimen of her talent, and if reluctant, he would end his

entreaties by saying: "Please play, not for my sake, but to show these English folks that if the French Canadians have not their talent for money-making, they are more artistically gifted. Do that for patriotism!" In Ottawa, his receptions at that very modest house at the corner of Maria and Metcalfe streets are still remembered by many. There, on Saturday evenings during the session, congregated members of parliament, journalists, civil servants, and not a few local artists, and, under the guidance of his cheerful spirit, the evening wore on merrily. One feature of these entertainments was unique, a sort of active representation of choruses as sung by the North-West *voyageurs*. Commandant Fortin, of the famous schooner *La Canadienne*, and Simpson, of Algoma, would set a row of a dozen chairs facing in the same direction. All those present, able to sing, would be seated on these chairs, and, taking the lead from Fortin, with his deep, full notes, would sing a *voyageur's* song. To give gusto to the performance, each improvised *voyageur* would swing his arms as though he were paddling a canoe, and this chorus would come again and again:

V'là le bon vent,
V'là le joli vent
Ma mie m'appelle,
V'là le bon vent,
V'là le joli vent
Ma mie m'attend!

How few now remain of the gay performers who welcomed the breeze that was bringing them to their

lady love *(ma mie)*! These entertainments offered a happy relaxation to Cartier, one of the most active of men; one who thought nothing of spending throughout the year fourteen hours a day in a field of labour much more exhausting than the one where eight hours is considered the limit of human strength. He valued time above all things, and anyone trespassing uselessly on it would become his enemy. In order to save it, he would assume with some visitors an air of *brusquerie* and bad humour quite discouraging to bores and place hunters. It was his habit to walk the streets of Montreal or Ottawa at a rapid gait, so that as few people as possible could waylay him to indulge in gossip or town talk.

I have made frequent references to his courage in the face of adverse circumstances, and in again referring to that great quality, it seems only right to refer to the characteristically bold stand which he felt compelled to take when a personal matter arose which, as is frequently the case, had a wider than individual interest.

After confederation, the imperial government distributed honours to reward those colonial statesmen who had taken a prominent part in the work of uniting the British North American provinces. The distinction of knighthood was conferred on John A. Macdonald, whilst Cartier, who had in 1858, while premier of Canada, initiated the union scheme, only received a C.B.

He at once notified Lord Monck that he could not accept the proffered honour, alleging as a motive for declining it, that, as the representative of the French in Canada, he could not consent to see them placed in a position inferior to that occupied by the other element of our population. The stand taken by Cartier, which was then generally approved, greatly embarrassed the colonial office, and a rather unpleasant correspondence ensued.

Edward Watkin, then president of the Grand Trunk Railway, a warm friend of Cartier and one who had taken a great interest in the confederation scheme, had also declined a C.B., because he thought an injustice had been done to the minister of militia. What complicated that delicate matter was the fact that such a refusal is disrespectful to the Crown, and therefore some way out of the trouble had to be looked for that would save appearances. The colonial secretary informed Lord Monck of the tangle and Cartier in turn explained it to Watkin in a letter dated, Ottawa, February 15th, 1868.

"With regard to my matter, would you imagine that the Duke of Buckingham has written a confidential note to Lord Monck, telling to this latter that there being no precedent for a resignation of the C.B., the only way to have my wishes carried out would be by the Queen directing by order in the *Gazette* my name to be struck out from the Order, which proceeding, the Duke adds, would be

construed by outsiders and the uninitiated as the outcome of misconduct. Lord Monck having communicated to me the substance of the Duke's communication, I have asked Lord Monck to obtain from the Duke leave to communicate to me the substance of his note in no confidential manner, in order that I may reply to it. I do not really think that the intention is to frighten me, in order to induce me to withdraw my letter asking leave to resign the C.B. That I will not do, and when the Duke's communication is under my eyes in no confidential manner, I will send such a reply that will make people understand the injury done to me, and the slight so absurdly offered to a million of good and loyal French Canadians. As a matter of course all that I say to you in this letter is strictly in confidence to you."

The matter was brought up in the Canadian House of Commons and during the debate general sympathy was expressed for Cartier, whose temper was still more aroused when he read in the *London Gazette* that the way out of the trouble which the Duke of Buckingham deprecated, had just been followed. So in great indignation he again wrote to Watkin:

"You very likely must have seen or heard of the notification published in the *London Gazette* at the end of the month of December last about the honours distributed in Canada in connection with the confederation. In that notification you must have seen that the names of myself and Galt

are omitted, and it was stated in that notification that it must be substituted for the one published on July 9th last, in which Galt's name and mine were inserted as C.B. Now you must recollect that some months ago I wrote you about a confidential communication of the Duke of Buckingham to Lord Monck, in order that it should be intimated to me and Galt, that there was no precedent of a resignation of the Order of the Bath, and that the only way left for the carrying out of Galt's wishes and mine would be by an order of Her Majesty ordering our names to be struck off the roll. The communication of the Duke having been made to me in a confidential manner, I had no opportunity to answer it. I had written to Lord Monck to ask the Duke's leave for communicating to me in no confidential manner the despatch of the Duke, in order to give me an opportunity to answer it. I never had any answer from Lord Monck to that request. To my great surprise, at the end of December last, I received from Lord Monck a note, accompanied by the copy of a despatch from the Duke, informing me that a mode had been found to meet my wishes and those of Galt, which consisted in the publication in the *London Gazette* of a notification omitting our names, and such notification to be substituted for the former one of July last.

"The reading of this last despatch more than astonished me, and my astonishment was greater when I saw by the *London Gazette* that it was

carried into effect by the notification above alluded to. I have had no more opportunity to answer the second despatch of the Duke than the first one, which was marked confidential. Allow me to add that the Duke expressed in his first communication that he did not like to suggest that my name should be struck off the roll, because an ungenerous construction now and hereafter might be made against me by those not acquainted with the fact. Now, by the course followed, as explained in his second despatch, I feel as badly treated as if the first course had been adopted. In one case my name would have been ordered to be struck off the roll, and by the second course followed, my name was ordered to be omitted in the second notification. There is not much difference between these two courses. I have written a letter to Lord Monck to complain of the second course followed, inasmuch as there being no reason assigned for the omission of my name in the second notification, a construction ungenerous to myself and my children after me could now and hereafter be made."

This matter might have been left where the *London Gazette* notice had placed it, but Sir Charles Tupper, who was then in London, interfered, and with great tact had it settled. It was owing to his timely intervention that justice was done and Cartier became a baronet of the United Kingdom. This squabble over a title would look very small were it not that it involved a question of

national feeling which raised it to more importance than it really deserved.[1]

[1] I insert here Sir Charles Tupper's letter, which has not before been published:

WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL, *March 31st, 1868.*

MY LORD DUKE:

Deeply impressed with the importance which attaches to everything calculated to strengthen the loyal devotion to the Crown which I am proud to know pervades every portion of the Dominion of Canada, and well knowing the warm interest which your Grace feels toward that portion of the empire, I venture to solicit an official interview for the purpose of communicating my views upon the desirability of submitting to Her Majesty the propriety of conferring upon the Hon. Mr. Cartier, the Minister of Militia, as high a mark of the royal favour as that bestowed upon Sir John A. Macdonald. Although I had the honour of proposing the latter gentleman as Chairman of the Conference of British North America delegates, held here in 1866, I think it but right to inform your Grace that but for the patriotic devotion of Mr. Cartier to the great project of confederation, and the courage with which, in the face of great difficulties and dangers he pursued that policy to the end, *the union could not have been accomplished.* I rejoice that it was the royal pleasure to confer deservedly a distinction so high upon Mr. Macdonald, but I regard it as a great misfortune that a million of Catholic Frenchmen, than whom Her Majesty has no subjects more loyally devoted to Her throne and person in any portion of Her empire, should feel that one of their own race and religion, whose standing was equally high in Canada, and whose claim to royal favour was as great, should not have been deemed worthy of the same gracious consideration. It is also right that I should say to your Grace that Mr. Cartier's acceptance of an inferior distinction would undoubtedly have destroyed the great influence which he wields among his countrymen, and impaired the power he is now able to exert so beneficially in the service of his Sovereign. I may also add that the liberty I have taken in bringing this matter under the notice of your Grace is inspired by no personal consideration, and is entirely without the knowledge of Mr. Cartier.

I have the honour to remain,

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM. Your Grace's most obedient servant, (Signed) CHARLES TUPPER.

In social intercourse Cartier always gave evidence of that sincerity and frankness which was one of the chief traits of his character. This he would show even at the risk of incurring personal displeasure. It was his frankness that once drew upon him the wrath of General Wolseley. Meeting Sir John A. Macdonald at dinner, I asked him if he could tell me why this officer had gone out of his way to signal out Cartier for adverse criticism from among all his colleagues. "For speaking his mind too openly," answered Sir John. "While I was at Washington, General Wolseley called upon Cartier to solicit the position of first lieutenant governor of Manitoba. My friend told him that this could not be done. By the way, the government had then decided to appoint Archibald to that important position. General Wolseley assumed from Cartier's answer that he disliked him, and hence his uncalled-for attack on the then minister of militia. But," added Sir John, "the general must have found out afterwards that, had Cartier and the government granted his request, they would have cut short his career. Returning to England after five years' absence he would have found himself a forgotten man, no more in touch with court influence, and would probably have been sent to some inferior command."

Cartier gave every one who saw him in parliament or in society the impression of being a quick and daring man, without any timidity. I was astonished when his nearest relative, now alive, and

another member of his family assured me last summer in Paris that he was the victim of a sort of uneasiness whenever he had to perform public duties. "He must have conquered that feeling afterwards," said I, "for he always looked to me as one full of assurance." "No," was the reply, "he fought against a native timidity all his life." If this be true the fact of the matter is that his very existence was but one long struggle, first against timidity, then against his natural defect, a rather disagreeable voice—a very bad English accent, and against the last but not the least, strong political opponents. No wonder that he broke down so early in life—no wonder that the blade wore out the scabbard so soon! He was not fifty-nine at his demise, and had spent twenty-five years in public life.

The session of 1872 marked Cartier's last appearance in parliament. It was a laborious session, and he had, as was his wont, taken a prominent part in its labours, conducting the debate on the Canadian Pacific Railway bill and the New Brunswick school question. Shortly after prorogation, his health, which had never given him anxiety, seemed suddenly to break down, and when he arrived in Montreal to seek re-election, he was a very sick, nay, more than that, a dying man. His great energy would keep him up on his feet a few hours a day. It is a fact that on July 21st he left his bed to be present at the nomination of candidates for Montreal East, and that all through the

campaign the fatal disease told on him more and more. Would to heaven that he had not faced the howling mob who at several meetings, forgetting that he had turned the tide of prosperity towards the commercial metropolis of Canada, hooted their old idol, and pelted him with stones and missiles! He would have been spared an ugly sight which added humiliation to his defeat.

It has often been the lot of successful politicians during the greater part of their career, to witness the tide of popular favour receding from them at its close. Cartier experienced the bitterness of such a situation with a pang which his illness, in its depressing effect, prevented him from concealing, although he did his best to put on a brave face. But when received at Ottawa with almost royal honours, he recalled the circumstances which induced Baldwin and La Fontaine to retire from politics, on account of the ingratitude of persons whom they had so long served, it was his own case he had in mind. He left Canada in September, 1872, never to return alive. Science did nothing for the man who had not known rest and was to know it only in death. He died in London on May 23rd, having had time to prepare for the great voyage and to ponder over the want of satisfaction which a life of agitation affords. Well might he have said like the great man of ancient times: "I have had everything that my country could give and it is worth nothing!"

HIS HONOURED MEMORY

After his death his fellow-countrymen duly appreciated his labours and recognized his sterling merit. Still not a square, not a street of Montreal bears his name. It might have been expected that before thirty years had elapsed, his friends would have gathered up the stones which were hurled at him one day, to form the pedestal of a monument recalling his public services and his devotion to his country. Perhaps, after all, they have thought that the best way in which to honour the memory of a man whose soul had the ring of pure metal, whose valuable actions appear in the lasting pages of history, is to follow in his footsteps and emulate his example.

INDEX

A

Annexation movement (1849), 45

Avenir, L', organ of the Democratic party, 26

B

Baldwin, Robert, forms government with LaFontaine, 16

Brown (George), his enmity towards Lower Canadian institutions, 28

C

Cartier, his ancestors, 3; the rebellion of 1837, 1, 2, 7, 9; educated at St. Sulpice, 3; opposes D. B. Viger's election in St. Hyacinthe, 17; first appearance in politics after rebellion, 18; in public life, 21; elected in Verchères, 21; offered portfolio by Hincks, 22; his connection with the Grand Trunk Railway, 22; clerical influences, 28; his alliance with the Upper Canada Conservatives, 33; violent attacks against by *Le Moniteur*, 24; his public services, 35; advocates construction of Montreal & Portland Railway, 46; prepares charter of Grand Trunk Railway, 48; his connection with Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific Railways, 50, 51; Pacific scandal, 53; confederation of British provinces—his ideas opposed to those of J. A. Macdonald as to basis of, 55-60; mission to England with W. McDougall for purchase of Hudson Bay rights, 68; French Canadians as British subjects speaking French, 69; introduces the Manitoba Bill, 1871, 71; his relation to the Catholic Church, 79; character, policy, and ideas, 106

Canada, Lower, state of, in 1848, according to Lord Elgin, 43; customs and manners, 117, 118

Cauchon, Joseph, his stand towards Cartier, 24

Chauveau, Pierre J. O., first prime minister of Quebec after confederation, 68

Civil code of Lower Canada, established by Cartier, 39; criticism and defence of, 81

Confederation of British provinces, 55

Constitution of 1791 suspended, 11

D

Democratic party organized in Lower Canada, 25

Dorion, Antoine Aimé, succeeds Papineau as head of the Liberal party, 25, 28

Durham, Lord, inquiry into the state of Lower Canada, 11

E

Education of French Canadians quite special, 4

SIR GEORGES ÉTIENNE CARTIER

Elgin, Lord, and the French Canadians, 5; urges Cartier to accept portfolio in MacNab administration, 22; mobbed in Montreal, 32; letter to Lord Grey on causes of financial crisis in Canada, 44

F

Fils de la Liberté, Cartier in their ranks, 7

J

Jetté, Sir Louis, one of the founders of *Le Parti National*, 30; defeats Cartier, 84

L

La Fontaine and the union of the Canadas, 16; La Fontaine and Cartier, 95

Laurier, Sir Wilfrid, his lecture on political liberalism, 27; his opinion of Cartier, 116

M

Manitoba School Law, 62; Bill introduced by Cartier, 71

Militia, reorganized by Cartier, 87

Macdonald, Sir J. A., at first a political opponent of Cartier, 32; the Macdonald-Cartier alliance, 33; favours legislative in preference to federal union of the provinces, 57; compared with Cartier, 100, f.; difference with Cartier on subject of legislative union, 102

N

New Brunswick school law, 69, 73; school law trouble, 73-77

North-West Rebellion, 69

P

Papineau and the rebellion, 1, 2, 6; his influence, 5, 6

Parti Catholique, Le, 82

Parti National, its organization, 30

Protestants of Lower Canada and Cartier, 38

R

Railways, Cartier introduces Grand Trunk Railway Bill, 22; advocates construction of Portland and Montreal Railway, 48; was in favour of Major Robinson's route *re* the Intercolonial Railway, 50, 51; presents Canadian Pacific Railway Incorporation Bill, 51

S

Seigniorial tenure, what it was, 36

T

Thomson, Poulett (Lord Sydenham), his character, 12; carries out plan of union of provinces, 12

Tupper, Sir Charles, requests knighthood for Cartier, in letter to Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, says without Cartier "the union could not have been accomplished," 129

U

Union of Lower Canada, 12; French Canadians protest against it, 13

V

Viger, Denis Benjamin, joins the Draper administration in 1844 and meets with Cartier's opposition, 17