

UNION OF THE COLONIES

OF

British North America :

BEING

THREE PAPERS UPON THIS SUBJECT,

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BETWEEN THE YEARS 1854 AND 1861.

BY

P. S. HAMILTON,

BARRISTER AT LAW, AND CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF MINES FOR THE PROVINCE  
OF NOVA SCOTIA.

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Montreal :

PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.

1864.



407. Hamilton



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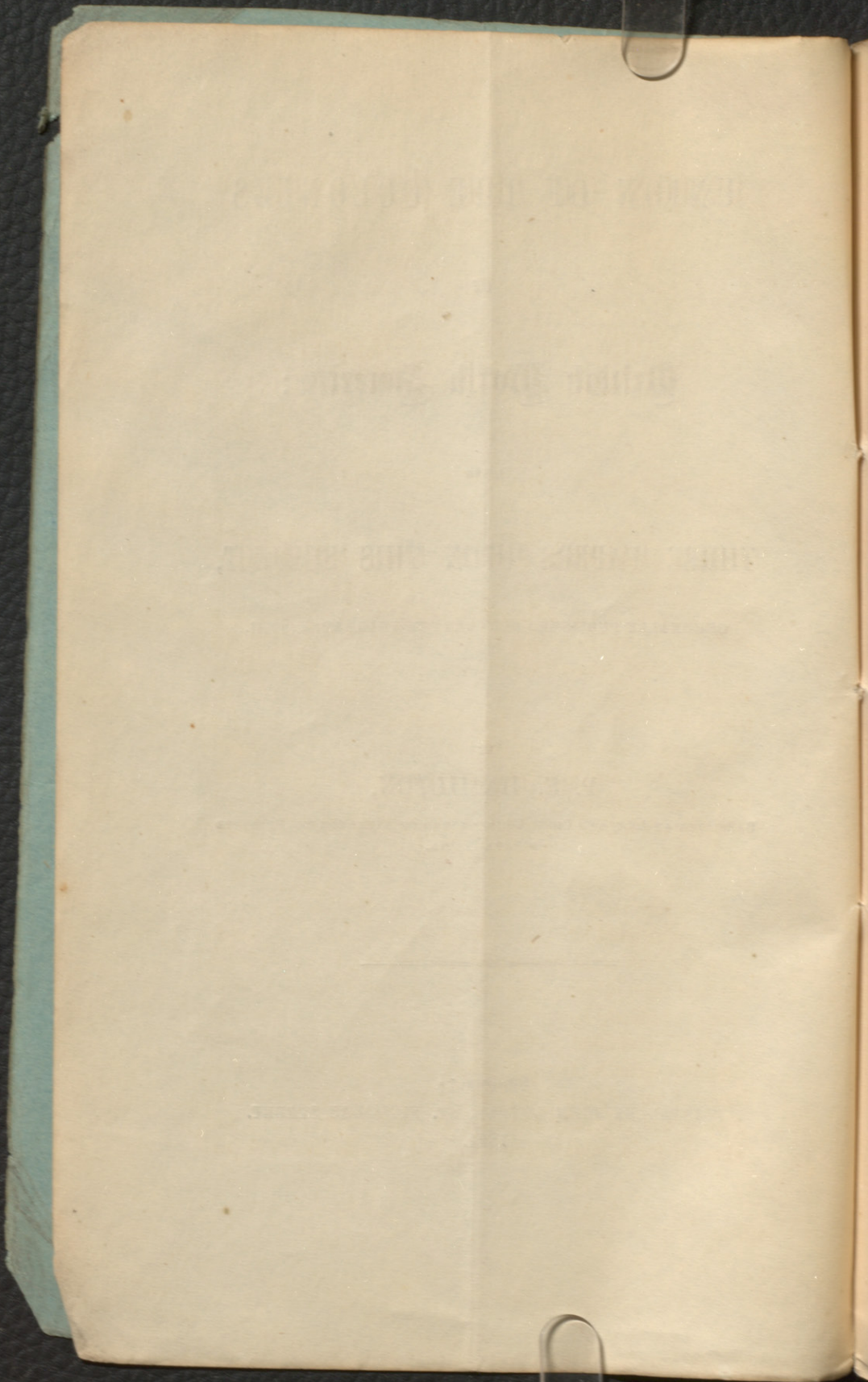
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# UNION OF THE COLONIES.

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## INTRODUCTION.

The dates appended to the several titles of the following papers indicate the time at which they were respectively published. They are the results of perhaps the most noteworthy, and certainly the most public efforts which, ever since 1849, the author has, within what seemed not beyond the possible limits of his direct or indirect influence, persistently made, on every seemingly fitting occasion, to advance the great political scheme which these essays advocate. They were, at the respective times of their original publication, pretty generally circulated by the author himself among the more prominent statesmen and politicians of the North American Colonies, and, to a more limited extent, of England also. With these classes they so far met with favor as to be, each of them, republished in full in several of the British American political journals and other periodicals, and in part by several of those of the United Kingdom.

Since the first of these little essays was offered to the public, the popular mind has become comparatively familiarized with the subject of a British American Colonial Union, and the minds of most of our public men are probably matured thereupon. Indeed, many points upon which the honest and painstaking student of Colonial politics then feared to offer his convictions to the public lest they might be scouted as those of an eccentric theorist, have, of late, come to be gravely and generally discussed as practical questions; and what, in 1854, might have been, and in some instances per-



haps was, laughed at as the scheme of a visionary, is now ably advocated by the leading minds of the country. In preparing the following papers, the author considered that he was about to address minds, to many of whom the subject matter of these papers was new. He therefore endeavored to suggest rather than instruct, and purposely refrained from entering upon the discussion of many matters of detail upon which his own opinion was matured, considering that to do so would then be premature, and that the views which, upon such matters, he would have to propound, might alarm the preconceived notions, or prejudices, of some classes whom he addressed. But of late the discussion of the subject of Colonial Union—discussion of the most able, widely spread, and popular character—has gone far beyond where it is left by the following papers. In fact, we have ceased to be merely theoretical; we are becoming practical. Whilst these lines are being written, a Convention, comprising the leading statesmen of British America, has already met at Quebec to settle the basis of a Union of these Colonies.

Under these circumstances, it may now be not unreasonably asked,—why republish the following papers? When the importance—nay, the necessity, of a Union of the Colonies is conceded, and when our leading statesmen are actually engaged in arranging the terms of that Union, why republish works mainly devoted to advocating that necessity, and which treat only generally of the practical details? The answer may be given in very few words. The author has very frequently of late been applied to for copies of some one, or all, of these essays; but all have been, for some time, out of print, and therefore not procurable. Again, whatever the result of the Quebec Convention, it is probable that the resolutions of that body will be submitted to the several Colonial Legislatures for approval before being acted upon. It is *possible* that the scheme matured by the Convention may be opposed, in whole or in part, in some of those Legislatures.



Under these circumstances, the writer considers 'it the duty of every person entertaining such earnest convictions as he does of the absolute necessity of the projected Union for the well-being of his country, to do anything and everything he honestly can which may, *by any possibility*, aid in the consummation of that Union.

It will be perceived that there is a repetition of some ideas in the course of these essays; and some of the arguments urged in favor of Union were more particularly applicable at the period when they were enunciated than they seem to be at the present time. But as to eliminate all the passages to which such objections apply would be to produce a new work, the author prefers reproducing these *brochures* in their original form. Referring to the earliest of these pamphlets—written in 1854—the author believes that he was the first to correct an error in which the public had been content to rest—*universally*—so far as any public announcement to the contrary could show—down to that period, relative to the material progress of the North American Colonies *as a whole*. It was there shown that, notwithstanding the constantly reiterated opinion to the contrary, the growth of these Provinces in population, commerce, wealth, and political importance generally had, down to 1851, been much more rapid than that of the United States, and therefore of any other part of America. The argument based upon the statistic which were furnished to prove this fact, has still greater force now than it had then. In the ten years from 1851 to 1861, the Provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, together added considerably more than a third to their population, it having increased from 2,253,000 in 1851, to 3,170,211 in 1861. During the same decade the trade of these Provinces has about doubled. In 1851 their imports amounted jointly to £6,833,855 stg.; their exports to £4,189,051 stg. In 1861 their imports had attained the value of £11,581,680 stg.; their exports



£9,641,947 stg. We have abundant evidence that in every other respect, the progress of these Colonies has been equally satisfactory.

It will be seen that, in warning British American Constitution makers against the evils of Federalism as exemplified in the United States, the author has ventured to predict the early and complete failure of the Federal Constitution in that country. His predictions have been fully verified at an earlier period than even he had supposed. It will also be seen that the probable aggressions of the United States republic have been dwelt upon as a sufficient reason why, for defensive purposes alone, these Colonies should be consolidated. Some persons may suppose that the dissolution of that Republic—and who is there outside of the Northern States who can doubt that it is irrevocably dissolved?—renders this argument now valueless. The writer does not think so. Before the severance of the Northern and Southern States, the well-known opposition of the latter to any further “annexation” of *non-slaveholding* territory furnished a partial guarantee that that Republic, as a whole, would not molest our British American soil. But we have no such guarantee now. When the Northern States come out of the present war, their ambition for territorial extension will unquestionably direct their desires towards British America more earnestly than they ever were before. If, on coming out of the struggle in which they are now engaged, those States do not find themselves too much enervated to attempt further active aggressions, there is a strong probability that, *without the Colonial Union now under consideration*, they will attempt conquests on their Northern frontier. There is no probability whatever that they could succeed in securing permanent possession of any part of the organized Colonies of British America. But the effort would necessitate a severe defensive struggle on the part of those Colonies; and it is to be feared that it would eventuate in the Yankee Republic



becoming possessed of the great central tract of British America, lying between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains, a territory which is invaluable to us, and which seems to be, even now, especially coveted by that Republic. But, *with* the projected Colonial Union and the defensive power which that Union would provide, we shall make it necessary for our republican neighbors to refrain from attempting any conquest in the direction of our frontiers.

Neither can it be supposed that the hostile feeling of the Northern States towards everything British, and especially towards British America, has become in any way mollified during the past few years. It is scarcely necessary to tell any British American that the very reverse is the case. The aggressive disposition, on the part of our nearest neighbors, towards these Colonies, is stronger now than it ever was. Should the Colonies become forthwith politically consolidated, and be therefore placed in a position to assume not only a strong defensive but an offensive attitude, there is little, or no probability that such aggressive disposition will be practically manifested. Should these Colonies remain wholly disunited as at present, or not firmly consolidated as a political unit, very disastrous results may be anticipated, viewing the matter even from this point alone,—results which may prove irremediable; but, with such a consolidation, we may smile at any hostile demonstration that can be made upon our most assailable frontier.

Whilst a Convention of the leading statesmen of the Colonies is actually engaged in discussing and elaborating the details of a scheme for Union, the adoption of which the members of that Convention expect to procure, it would be useless here to advocate special views upon any of those details. Even if the author could assume that he is capable of instructing the members of that Convention, their plan must have been elaborated before these lines can reach the eyes of the public. Again, it seems scarcely necessary to



discuss here, with a view to influencing the minds of the members of any of those bodies to whom it may be submitted for approval, any detail of a scheme which will doubtless be accepted, or rejected, as a whole by such bodies. But there is one point upon which the author conjectures that the Convention may feel a delicacy in propounding any views, especially for the approval of the Imperial Government—that is, as to the Constitution of the head of the proposed consolidated Colony of British North America.

So late as 1854,—when the first of the following papers was written,—and even later, republican propensities seemed to be so rampant in North America that one could scarcely venture to hope for a popular hearing to any proposal for extending or perpetuating the monarchical principle. Even British Americans—truly loyal British Americans, believing themselves firmly attached to royalism—had, unconsciously perhaps, become imbued, to a certain extent, with republicanism. Fortunately, a great change has come over us. The anticipations of those who had ventured to predict the utter, signal failure of republican institutions on this continent, have already been fully verified. The last, much-vaunted model republic, the United States, has proved an ignominious failure beyond all question to any person outside its borders. Glance over the whole of South America, where *Nature* seems to have provided everything for the development of great and prosperous nations; and the only political organization which the philanthropic cosmopolite can regard with anything approaching to satisfaction is that of the Empire of Brazil, a monarchy. Coming into North America, we find that Mexico, with all the natural elements of greatness, has, during half a century of republican rule,—or rather, misrule,—been all that time in a state of anarchy. Just now, that long distracted nation is adopting the monarchical form of Government, and with prospects of tranquillity and prosperity combined which it never enjoyed before.



The once United States are in a state of political chaos ; and we hear rumors—vague, it is true—that the so-called Southern Confederacy, when it can get the opportunity of determining upon its political Constitution for the future, seriously thinks of adopting the monarchical principle.

In the face of facts which are daily obtruding themselves upon our notice, it is difficult to conceive that any well-informed British American politician can be opposed to monarchical institutions, or can be indifferent to the necessity of maintaining them in our own country. But many of them may not have sufficiently considered how they can best be maintained and perpetuated.

On a careful study of the Constitutions of the various British Colonies, it would really appear that, in framing them, human ingenuity has been taxed to its utmost to devise and incorporate in them two principles most conducive to the political instability of those several Colonies. Human ingenuity seems to have succeeded. Consequently, two principles which have been essential to the success of the British Constitution as worked out in the Mother Country, have been carefully eliminated from the Constitutions of the Colonies. Our executive head is periodically and frequently changed ; and the old English law of primogeniture and of entail of real estate is not suffered to exist. The tendency of both these principles, which we have *not* in our Colonial Constitutions, is to attach men—not certain individuals or classes, but men generally—to the soil, to the Crown, to their country. They tend immensely to maintain the political stability of a nation ; whilst they in no way impede its material or intellectual progress. An open advocacy of the law of entail of real estate in these Colonies will probably be as startling now as that of a political consolidation of them was ten years ago. British Americans may perhaps become more familiarized with the idea and more favorably disposed towards it in coming years. It is not the author's purpose, here and



now, to advocate that principle of law; but to speak of another still more important essential to political stability,—that is, the necessity for a not periodically changing, but *quasi* permanent, hereditary, executive head,—for virtually, in short, a hereditary monarch. It will be at once suggested that we have a hereditary monarch. True; but that monarch is far removed from us; and it may be said, without irreverence, that, strong as is the sentiment of loyalty among British Americans, our feelings towards our Queen are somewhat analogous to those which we entertain towards a much higher potentate. We require a permanent executive head nearer home—nay, at home.

The student of history cannot but have observed that all republics, ancient or modern, embracing any considerable territory or population, have been short-lived. Their political system has been wanting in that distinctive, brilliant, and attractive centre in which the popular affections concentrate, around which all the lesser powers of the state revolve, and towards which nearly all that is noble and aspiring in the state necessarily gravitates. It is the reproductive core of the fruit, the centre of the stellar system, the apex of the pyramid, the keystone of the arch; it is the monarch and his court. This *desideratum* can only be had in a *hereditary* executive head.

Nominally, we now live under a monarchy; but in reality our political institutions are essentially republican, even to that of the head of our Colonial Government. Our Governors are replaced every five or six years. They might almost as well be elected by popular vote at once. It can really make but little difference whether, for the brief period they hold office, they are chosen by popular suffrage *in* the Colony or appointed by some other power *outside* of it. They are called representatives of our sovereign; but, from the very tenure of their evanescent office, they cannot be regarded as Her representatives.



An essential to the consolidation of these Colonies and their ultimate success as a nation, will be a *hereditary viceroy*. It is scarcely necessary here to say that nothing could be more grateful to the feelings of British North Americans than to see that hereditary vicereignty vested in some member of the family of our present Queen. A viceroy hereditary in some branch of the Royal Family, to which the affections of British America so fondly cling, would be an earnest of the political stability of the United Colonies. It would also afford an additional tie, if any such can be wanting, between British America and the Mother Country.

If it should prove, when the proceedings of that body become known, that the Quebec Convention have not determined upon a hereditary vicereignty as an element in our prospective Constitution, it is certainly most desirable that those who may have the power to do so, should supply that element. It is one which is absolutely essential to our political success.

The author cannot but think that the discussion here of any other detail of the projected Union Constitution would be uncalled for whilst we are still unaware of the decisions at which the Quebec Conference have arrived upon those details. Should it ever be made to appear that the following *brochures*, either in their previous or present editions, have aided in ever so slight a degree in bringing about a Union of the Colonies of British North America under a stable, monarchical Constitution, the writer must say that he will feel proud in having assisted to lay the very corner-stone of what he knows will be his country's true greatness.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, October, 1864.







OBSERVATIONS  
UPON A  
UNION OF THE COLONIES  
OF  
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

1854-55.

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A detailed scheme for a Union of the North American Colonies was drawn up by the late Hon. Richard John Uniacke, and submitted to the Imperial Cabinet, about the commencement of the present century. A similar scheme was proposed by the late Chief Justice Sewell of Quebec, in 1814; and was warmly advocated by His Royal Highness the late Duke of Kent. Since then it has been strongly urged upon the Imperial Government by that distinguished statesman, the late Earl of Durham; it has been highly recommended by nearly every author of respectable reputation who has published his views upon British America; it has been extensively discussed by the provincial press, and by the people, at their own fire-sides; it has been spoken of, in the highest terms, on the floors of the Canadian Parliament; and, in the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia, a movement—in which the “leaders” of the Government, and the Opposition, of the day, cordially joined—has been made to carry it into effect. This being the case, the writer, in advocating the necessity for such a union, can do little more than repeat what has been already said, and give a brief summary of the reasons why this idea of *union* has taken so firm a hold upon the British American mind.



The principal of these reasons is to be found in *the relation which the North American Colonies bear to all the rest of the world*. Among the natives of those Provinces, there is that craving after nationality which is inseparable from the minds of a free people in whom the want is unsatisfied. The peculiar situation of the British Americans makes them feel this want in an unusual degree. Situated between Great Britain, on the one hand, and the United States of America, on the other, they are incessantly tantalized by the might and glory of these, the two greatest nations on earth. They know and they feel that British America too, is capable of taking and maintaining, in the estimation of the world, an honorable national rank, beside these elder powers; but is prevented from doing so by her anomalous position. All the institutions of both Great Britain and the United States are on a grand and magnificent scale. None of those belonging to the Provinces are so; because, from their disconnected position, they cannot unitedly carry out any great work, and no one of them is capable of doing so alone. The dissatisfaction which this engenders, is heightened by the comparisons provoked by the vicinity of their insignificant institutions to those of their more distinguished neighbors.

The British American, on looking across the Southern frontier of his native land, sees a people, distinct but speaking the same language and having many of their leading institutions founded upon the same model as those of his own country, who have a world-wide reputation, and to whom the field for individual exertion is unbounded, and for whom the rewards of success are of the very first class. He there sees men of the humblest grade rising to a position which places them on a political level with the greatest potentates on earth; others attaining a world-wide fame as statesmen, as jurists, as diplomatists, and as military and naval officers. He sees the republic of the United States assuming, to itself exclusively, the title of "American," whilst its territory is



inferior in extent, in resources, and in advantageous geographical position, to that portion of the continent to which he himself belongs. He knows that the flag of the United States is known and honored, in every corner of the earth, as that of a nation which is considered a wonderful phenomenon for its great achievements in wealth and commercial prosperity; whilst British America, which, under all disheartening circumstances, has worked up to a position which makes her, in reality, "the third commercial power on earth," has no distinguishing rank, place, or even name, beyond her own borders. He knows the American Republic to be a familiar idea—its history, institutions, wealth, power, and future prospects intimately known—among communities who have never heard of the American Provinces; or who, if they have, think of them but as some barbarous deserts "on the outskirts of creation." On looking farther away, to the other independent nations of America and to the inferior States of Europe, he sees them, although inferior to British America in every point of view, except the mere accident of distinct nationality, seated in the commonwealth of nations, and their alliance courted by the greatest empires.

Turning to his native country, the contrast which he sees it present to each of these, and particularly to its republican neighbor, is not at all calculated to gratify his ambitious feelings, whether they are of a national or merely personal character. British America cannot receive that degree of foreign consideration to which, taken as an aggregate, it is, in strictness, entitled; because it cannot, in fact, be considered as an aggregation, but as a number of disconnected and mutually independent individuals, each of which, regarded separately, loses immeasurably by that contrast already mentioned. To be a British American, means nothing in the world's estimation: to be a Canadian, a New Brunswicker, or a Nova Scotian, is to be just the next thing to nothing.



On coming down to his own individual case, the British American finds the prospect not more cheering. The Provinces have but few prizes to offer, as rewards to honorable exertion in the higher walks of life. Those *honors*, which, under established national organizations, furnish so powerful a stimulus to industry and talent, are here "few and far between;" and the few which are attainable, are so insignificant, as to be insufficient, in themselves, to satisfy the natural cravings of human nature for distinction. The very channels by which such *honors* are usually attained, are virtually closed against the American Colonist. True, he belongs to that great empire in which, as a general rule, talented exertion meets with more signal rewards than in any other; but he is far removed from the arenas on which those rewards are achieved; and practically, although not in theory, is excluded from the fountain head whence they proceed. Few feel the desire to enter any of those professions by which alone they can hope to attain a distinguished rank as *Britons*, in contradistinction to mere local rank; because, by doing so, they must necessarily turn their backs for ever upon what they consider as more particularly their own country. Apart from this consideration, they know too well that they have the smallest chance of success. The British American Colonist believes—with how much reason, let others judge—that it would be next to madness for him to enter the British army, or navy, without that interest at head-quarters—not possessed by one of his countrymen out of ten thousand—which is necessary to procure promotion even when it is honorably earned. A similar lack of patronage aids in deterring him from entering either of the English "learned professions." The *Corps Diplomatique*, it is sufficiently obvious to every one, is completely closed against him. The Imperial Parliament, the diplomatic body, the army, and the navy being virtually closed against him, the Colonial Bar and the Colonial Legis-



lature, furnish the only narrow avenues by which he can attain what may be called professional distinction. Whether or not he possesses the particular talents required for success in either of these, he knows that the distinction which that success will confer is extremely insignificant. A seat in a Provincial Cabinet, or on the Bench of one of the many Courts which share the legal and equitable jurisdiction of the Provinces, affords, in itself, but a small temptation to the man of powerful intellect and lofty aspirations. The British American sees men, in the Mother Country, springing up to the rank of Field-Marschals, Admirals, founders of noble houses, Viceroy's presiding over countries which are themselves mighty empires—nay, to the position of virtual rulers of the great empire which comprises many of such vice-royalties. He *may be* by nature qualified to enter the lists in competition with these world-renowned fellow-subjects of his. He is precluded by his position from making the attempt. A few miles from his own home he may see one with whom probably he is personally acquainted, and has always considered as, in every respect, his inferior, raised to the high position of President of the United States. *He* may not aspire even to the position of Governor of his native Province.

It may be said that it is very unphilosophical in the British Americans to entertain these ambitious feelings. That may be so, but the feelings *are* entertained nevertheless. They are not a more philosophical people than any other enlightened class of the human family; and it is but natural to suppose that they must experience emotions which affect powerfully all such classes, but more particularly the Anglo-Saxon race. Whatever may be said in condemnation of personal ambition, it will scarcely be denied, that, where that feeling is systematically held in check, or confined within narrow limits, there can be no very long and peaceful continuance of what is called *national progress*. There will be



either political convulsions, or general sluggishness. Personal ambition, as already shown, is now being thwarted, in British America, after both these modes. Two results of this, already too clearly discernible, are a strong feeling of discontent among the more intellectual and better educated classes, and the splitting up of the whole community into small, but violent, political factions.

A Union of the North American Colonies would remove the causes of this discontent and smother this faction spirit among the colonists. Such a Union would throw open an arena vast enough for the desires of the most ambitious—one in which *all* professions would soon find ample scope for action and rewards commensurate with their exertion. The old, narrow, partizan spirit would speedily die out in the new combinations thus formed; and politicians, of whatever name or party, would move with a higher and nobler aim. It would also satisfy the cravings of that feeling more widely extended, and perhaps deeper, than any which has self alone for its object. It would satisfy the cravings of *national* ambition. Men are not quite satisfied with their country, whatever it may be, unless it possesses, in their estimation, some considerable degree of grandeur or glory, either past, present, or *future*. The accident of birth is rarely, if ever, sufficient in itself to attach a man to his native country—at least, it is insufficient to render him quite satisfied with it. He wants something more to cling to. In contemplating the existence of his country, as in contemplating that of himself individually, he is not satisfied to confine his desires to the isolated *present*, however favorably circumstanced that present may be. He would fain indulge in fond reminiscences of the *past*, or exult in glorious anticipations of the *future*. To the British American, as such, the past is a blank. A consummation of the Provincial Union, would be to him an assurance that the future would not present the same dreary void. It would give his country a name and a standing



which would be known and recognized in every corner of the earth ; and would make it such a country as he could cling to with affection, and regard with pride. Though its history and local associations would be for him unconnected with the traditions of a long line of ancestry, he could hope that they would be brightened by the deeds of a happy and glorious posterity. Few reflecting persons, in British America, of whatever rank, have not perceived, with painful feelings, the insignificant position which, in a national point of view, their country has hitherto occupied. A compact political Union would be, at once, the most effective and the most feasible means of removing this wide-spread discontent.

The argument for Union comprised in the foregoing observations, is one which has been felt and appreciated only by the more intelligent classes of the Colonists. There is another argument, which, whether recognised or not, is certainly felt by all. This is the argument deducible from *the relation which the Provinces bear to each other*—from the effect which their isolated and mutually independent condition has upon their internal prosperity. From the time when the Provinces became separately organised as dependencies of the British Crown, until the present day, they have been as foreign countries to each other. They have, it is true, been in many respects, alike, although separated. They have been subject to the same Crown, and have had all their principal institutions modelled upon the same originals ; yet, from whatever cause, it is useless now to enquire, they have until within a few years past, kept entirely aloof from each other. Each acting for itself, has quite ignored the existence of the others ; and, by this means, needless differences have arisen between their various juridical codes, their public institutions, and their commercial regulations. Not only have such differences arisen, but they have led the Colonists to thwart and seriously injure each other, in their mutual intercourse. Increasing wealth and intelligence, with their



consequent demand for a larger field of action, having necessarily brought them into closer contact, have led to the removal of some of the principal impediments in the way of that intercourse; yet those very increased facilities only make more vexatious the remaining obstacles to a perfect Union. It is but a few years since the Colonies adopted the system of free commercial interchange of commodities with each other, instead of the system of protective duties which they had previously upheld to their great mutual injury. They are still separated commercially by the troublesome barriers which necessarily exist between independent countries, however amicably united by treaty alone. The needless existence of so many entirely separate and co-ordinate legal jurisdictions, in a single and compact section of the empire, as British America naturally is, tends, in a great degree, to impede commercial intercourse between its various parts. Moreover, the existence of several sets of commercial regulations, alike in all leading points but just sufficiently dissimilar to clash with each other and to perplex those interested under them, tends, in a still greater degree, to the same result.

Their political isolation hinders the Provinces from carrying out any great work in which they are interested in common, and which requires their joint efforts. A melancholy instance of this may be seen in their futile attempts, extending over a period of some twelve years, towards the construction of an inter-provincial railway. The Provinces were all very desirous of having that great work carried on; and, since it was proposed, have, each of them within its own boundaries, undertaken and commenced similar works of vast magnitude, in proportion to their means. No one doubts that, if the Provinces had been united under a single Colonial Government at the time this great national work was first proposed, the road would now be nearly if not quite completed from Halifax to the foot of Lake Huron.



There are numerous other public works, besides railroads, in which the Provinces are equally interested, requiring the co-operation of all, but which, under the present system, either cannot be carried on at all, or their progress must be attended with checks and delays which are extremely annoying and detrimental to the general interests of the country. So remote are these Provinces, socially and politically, from each other, that it is extremely difficult even for private capitalists, residing in two or more of them, to unite in any undertaking requiring their joint efforts; and, if the operations of the undertaking are intended to extend into more than one Province, it seems to be practically next thing to impossible.

To say that their present state of disunion discourages the production of native literature and mechanical invention, in the Provinces, may seem, at the present time, a small argument in favor of Union. They being new countries, but few attempts have been made in either of these branches of intellectual development. Yet, however slight the results of this discouragement thus far, they must increase with the lapse of time; and, if suffered to continue, would, without doubt, soon become a very serious evil. Giving an individual the power of securing his patent, or his copy-right, over the whole of the Provinces, by going through a troublesome and expensive ordeal in each one separately, can but slightly modify the general tendency of complete inter-colonial independence in this matter.

There are innumerable points of detail in which this want of Union seriously retards the general prosperity of the Provinces. Few persons, residing in British America, have not, in their own persons, seriously felt its injurious results. The cure for all this is obvious. Let a Legislative Union of the Provinces take place, and all the evils alluded to, under this division of the subject, terminate immediately. This is too nearly self-evident to require anything in the shape of proof;



and the mode by which that Union would effect such a result, is too plain to require any demonstration.

There is yet a third point of view in which the Provinces must be regarded, furnishing an argument in favor of Union; that is, *the relation which those Provinces, as component parts of the British Empire, bear to foreign countries, and particularly to the United States of America.* Regarded in this respect, their present aspect must suggest feelings of not the most pleasurable nature to a large majority of the British Americans, and certainly should give some concern to the Mother Country. The United States have, since attaining their independence, increased in area, wealth and physical strength to an extent which has aroused the wonder, and which, but for some attendant circumstances, might excite the admiration of the civilized world. That republic has not been at all particular as to the means by which her present *status* has been attained. She is the imbodiment of ultra-Democracy, among the civilized states of the New World, as Russia is the imbodiment of ultra-Monarchical Absolutism, among those of the Old; and the rapid progress of the two nations, from comparative insignificance to a prominent rank among first-class powers, has been not dissimilar, either in general nature, or in the means by which effected. That rapid rise to power has doubtless been caused, in a great measure, by activity in internal improvement; but it has been mainly owing to a system of aggression by which they have increased their own strength at the expense of neighbors who were too heedless to be disturbed by those aggressions, or too weak to oppose them. Great Britain, with the other nations of Western Europe, has awakened to a sense of the misdeeds of Russia—she still sleeps over those of the United States, although none the less menacing to her own security. The British American subjects of Her Majesty are too near the scene of action to be unconscious, or uninterested spectators of the aggressive policy of the United States.



In 1803, the Government of that country, by taking advantage of Napoleon's necessities, extorted from the French, under the name of a purchase, the Province of Louisiana, thereby more than doubling the extent of its territory. By driving another extremely clever bargain with Spain, in 1819, Florida was obtained. In 1842 the "Ashburton Treaty," which settled what was called the "North-Eastern Boundary Dispute," between Great Britain and the United States, gave to the latter, without their having any valid claim to it, a further acquisition of territory, inconsiderable indeed as to extent, but, from its position, of incalculable advantage to British America. This treaty, as has been since clearly proved, was effected by means of gross misrepresentation, on the part of the United States Government and its officials. By a somewhat similar course of procedure, attended by what British Americans will ever consider an indefensible disregard of her own rights and interests, on the part of Great Britain, the grasping republic, in 1846, obtained a portion of Oregon, thereby reaching the Pacific Ocean and acquiring a further immense increase of valuable territory. On their southern frontiers, the United States have pursued a system of *annexation*, somewhat different, but no less successful. For some years previous to 1836, a number of "American" citizens—cautious pioneers of a class of men who have since become more daring in their movements, and have acquired a wide notoriety, under the name of *filibustieros*—pushed their way southwards into the sparsely populated Mexican territory of Texas. Upon finding themselves sufficiently strong to risk the attempt, they raised the standard of revolt against the Mexican Government. Assisted by large bodies of volunteers who flocked to the scene of action, from all parts of the United States, the rebels did not have to contend very long against Mexico, impoverished and demoralized as she was by a quarter of a century of civil war. Texas became an independent country, and, in 1845, that territory was *annexed*,



and formed another of the United States. By this series of adroit manœuvres, Mexico lost one-fifth of her territory ; and the United States gained an addition nearly equal to one-fifth of what they previously held.

Throughout those regions of imperfectly explored wilderness, where national boundary lines are not so intimately known, or so accurately defined, as in Europe, there cannot be much difficulty, when the desire is not wanting, in raising a dispute relative to land-marks. So it was soon discovered, both in the United States and in Mexico. A dispute, turning mainly upon the question of the south-western boundary of Texas, brought the two countries into actual hostilities ; and the year 1846 saw an "American" invading army cross the Rio Grande. If the Mexican contest with the Texan rebels was short and decisive, this one was still more so ; for now Mexico, weaker and more distracted internally than ever, had the whole of the United States as her avowed enemy. Part of the price at which she purchased peace, was the disposal of just one-third of her whole remaining territories which went to increase the wealth and power of her insatiable neighbor and enemy, and which forms rather more than one-sixth of the whole territory now possessed by the United States. By the peace of 1848, the latter country acquired the fertile, gold-bearing California, with a wider and more valuable *frontage* on the Pacific, and the large territory of New Mexico, opening into the heart of Mexico an unobstructed road for further and future conquests. Whoever has observed the course of events, in that quarter, since the peace of 1848, cannot suppose it will be very long before such further conquests will be attempted. We have but recently seen an attempt made to perpetrate upon Cuba another revolution on the Texan principle.

This rapid growth of the great North American republic is fraught with painful considerations, to the British American people—the more so from their observation of the means by



which that growth has, in a great measure, been effected. But apart from all consideration of the means by which the United States have acquired the vast territories and consequent political strength they now possess, one would naturally suppose that the mere fact of such acquisition would be sufficient to give serious concern to the *British nation*. In 1783, those States were contained within an area of less than 390,000 square miles,—the whole States and “Territories” together occupying but 720,000 square miles,—and contained a population of not more than two and a half millions. In 1854 they have a territory of 2,750,000 square miles, and a population of over twenty-four millions. The growth of the Russian Empire, in territory, population, wealth—in power generally, during a period of 150 years, has not equalled that of the “American” Republic, for a space of less than half that time. Great Britain has begun to feel serious alarm lest the Russian Autocrat should, by crossing nearly 2000 miles over the savage deserts of Central Asia, attempt a conquest of the Anglo-Indian Empire. It is somewhat singular that she should entertain no apprehensions lest the democratic power of the United States should cross the St. Lawrence and the St. Croix, and attempt the conquest of her no less important North American Colonies. Russia has never yet attempted, or even made any decided demonstration in the way of attempting, the apprehended conquest of India. The forces of the United States have twice invaded the North American Provinces; and—let men say what they will about the ties of kindred, and “America’s” affection for her Mother Country—the desire to do so again remains quite as strong as it ever was. There is only the most extreme possibility that the United States will ever bring British North America under their dominion; but it is quite within the bounds of probability that the attempt will be made—and that at no very remote period, unless means are taken to prevent it. The cheapest and most effective of those means would be to



place the Provinces in a position to defend themselves—to give them that self-reliance, that compactness of physical strength, that unity of action, and increased dissemination and intensity of national feeling, which can be given by a Legislative Union of those Provinces, and by that only.

A few statistics will go far towards enabling us to judge of the capacity, present and future, of the Provinces, if so united, to form a bulwark against foreign encroachment. They will also enable us to form an idea of the real value and importance of those Provinces, and consequently of the results which would be likely to follow their violent separation from the Mother Country. The growth of British America will be better comprehended by comparing it with that of her more celebrated neighbor, the United States, whose rapid progress has so much astonished the world. An opinion has very generally prevailed on this continent, and also in Great Britain in so far as any opinion is there entertained on the subject, to the effect that, while the United States have advanced amazingly in population, wealth, commercial enterprise, and general prosperity, British America has remained almost stationary. This opinion has done serious injury both to the reputation of the latter country, as a field for emigration, and to that of its inhabitants as an active and intelligent people. Facts prove, that, of the two countries, the progress of British America has been the most rapid.

Let us begin with the comparative increase in the population of the two countries; and take, as a starting point, the year 1783, from which period dates the separate, national existence of the United States. In 1780 the population of those States amounted to 2,051,000. In 1790 it was 3,929,872.

In 1783, it may be fairly estimated at.....	2,500,000
In 1850, it amounted to 23,191,074; and, in 1851, say..	24,000,000
Increase in 68 years, from 1783 to 1851.....	21,500,000
Equal to 860 per cent.	



The population of the whole of Canada, in 1784, and say in 1783, amounted to.....	113,000
That of the Lower Provinces, including the Loyalists who settled there at the close of the Revolutionary War,..	32,000
	<hr/>
In all	145,000
The population of Canada West, in 1850, was by census returns 781,000—in 1852, 952,004— and, in 1851, say.....	
	871,500
Canada East, in 1848,—770,000 ; in 1852,— 890,261 ; in 1851 say.....	840,500
New Brunswick, by census of 1851,.....	194,000
Nova Scotia, by do.....	277,000
Prince Edward Island, in 1848, 62,678 : at same rate of increase as for three years previous to that time, in 1851, it would be.....	70,000
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	2,253,000
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Increase in 68 years, from 1783 to 1851.....	2,108,000
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Equal to 1450 per cent.

At the same rate of increase, the population of the United States would have been thirty-six and a quarter millions. In the ten years previous to 1850, during which time the tide of emigration set more strongly towards the United States than at any former period, the population of those States increased at the rate of 36·36 per cent. : that of the Provinces, during the ten years previous to 1851, at the rate of 48·41 per cent. To rectify the erroneous supposition which, probably, will immediately impress itself upon many minds, that this rapid growth, on the part of British America, has taken place in the Upper Canada section alone, it may be observed, that, during those respective decades, the population of New Brunswick—the lowest, in this respect, on the Provincial list—increased at a more rapid rate than that of any of the Eastern States except Massachusetts and Rhode Island ; and that Nova Scotia nearly equalled the State of New York. In these computations, no allowance has been made for that addition to the population of the United States which has been caused by the acquisition



of territory. That share which emigration has added to the population of British America, must be due, it is but natural to suppose, solely to the genuine merits of the country as a field for emigration. Its name has no such *prestige* as has attached to that of the United States, from the moment of their attaining their independence. Its great commercial, agricultural, and other advantages, have not been constantly trumpeted to the world like those of the adjoining Republic and some other Colonial sections of the British Empire.

It may be contended that a rapid increase in the population of a country is no *certain* indication of its prosperity; but certainly it forms a strong presumption of such prosperity. But further statistics may be shown, affording more conclusive proofs. Supposing the case of the United States to be made, we may continue the comparison.

The tonnage of vessels owned by the Provinces (Newfoundland included) in 1806, amounted to.....	71,943
In 1850,.....	446,935
	374,992 tons
Increase,	
Equal to 521 per cent.	
The tonnage of the United States, in 1806, amounted to.....	1,208,735
In 1850,.....	3,535,454
	2,326,719 tons
Increase,	
Equal to 191 per cent.	

No one will pretend to doubt that the tonnage of the Provinces has continued to increase in the same—if not in a much greater—ratio, down to the present time, although statistics of its present amount are not easily procurable.

The value of *imports* into the United States, in 1851, reduced to sterling, amounts to..... £43,244,986  
Equal to £1·80 per head on the whole population.

The value of *exports*, for the same year, amounted to.... £43,677,602  
Equal to £1·81 per head.

The *imports* of Canada, in 1851, amounted to..... £4,650,088 stg.



Deduct value of imports from other B. N. A. Colonies,.....	99,480 stg.	
	<hr/>	4,559,608
New Brunswick,.....	970,488 "	
Less imports from B. N. A. Colonies,...	134,937 "	
	<hr/>	835,551
Nova Scotia,.....	1,105,528 "	
Less imports from B. N. A. Colonies,...	204,483 "	
	<hr/>	901,045
Prince Edward Island,.....	107,751 "	
Less estimated imports from B. N. A. Colonies,.....	74,822 "	
	<hr/>	32,929
		<hr/>
Total, (in Sterling)		£6,320,133
Equal to £2·80 per head on population.		
In 1851, the value of <i>exports</i> from Canada amounted to .....		
	£2,652,475 stg.	
Less exports to B. N. A. Colonies,.....	193,433 "	
	<hr/>	2,459,042
New Brunswick,.....	756,021 "	
Less exports to B. N. A. Colonies, .....	59,572 "	
	<hr/>	696,449
Nova Scotia,.....	708,462 "	
Less exports to B. N. A. Colonies,.....	269,319 "	
	<hr/>	439,143
Prince Edward Island,.....	72,093 "	
Less exports to B. N. A. Colonies.....	34,461 "	
	<hr/>	37,632
		<hr/>
Total (in Sterling)		£3,632,266

Equal to £1·61 per head on population.

The value of ships built and sent out of the Provinces for sale, is not included in the above exports. If the value—which can be estimated only—of this important article of British American export, were added to the above sum, along with an allowance which should be made for under valuation of articles, there can be no doubt whatever that the sum of the value of exports would exceed—and very considerably exceed—that of the United States, in proportion to the population.



If we carry our researches down to a more recent period, the result appears still more favorable for the Provinces.

The *imports* of the United States, according to published returns, amounted, in 1853, to £53,595,735 stg., shewing an increase of 23 per cent. since 1851.

The *exports*, for the same year, amounted to £46,195,031 stg., making an increase of 5 per cent. since 1851.

In 1853, the *imports* of Canada, less imports from other

North American Colonies, were.....	£6,269,766 stg.
Of New Brunswick, less as above,.....	1,411,523
“ Nova Scotia, “ .....	1,106,925
“ Prince Edward Island, “ .....	113,544

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£8,901,758 stg.

Increase, since 1851, equal to 41 per cent.

In the same year, the *exports* of Canada, less as above, were .....

.....	£4,126,353
Of New Brunswick, were .....	955,493
“ Nova Scotia, “ .....	667,526
“ Prince Ed. Island, “ .....	55,912

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£5,805,284 stg.

Increase, since 1851, 59 per cent.

Newfoundland, as will be observed, is not taken into any of the above calculations; although the imports and exports to and from that Colony, are included in the deductions made from those of the other Provinces. Neither is the trade of Rupert's Land, through Hudson Bay, or that of the Pacific Coast and the already populous Colony of Vancouver Island, taken into account. Although statistics from some of these cannot be easily procured, enough is, however, known concerning the extent of their trade, to lead to the belief, that, if accurate statements of the exports and imports of the *whole* of British America could be furnished, they would prove the trade of the country, in the aggregate, to be in a more prosperous condition even than is shown by the above figures, as to part.

To some persons, it may seem as absurd thus to connect



the Atlantic Provinces with British Oregon, Vancouver, or Queen Charlotte's Islands, as to connect them, in like manner, with New Zealand. But it must be borne in mind, that we are considering the question of a Union of the British North American Colonies; and the great object of that Union would not be attained, unless every part of British North America—particularly of the continental portions—participated in it. The practicability of such a Union, with reference to geographical difficulties, is fast ceasing to be considered a mere visionary idea. A petition signed by several of the leading men of Canada and the Northern States, has been laid before the Canadian Parliament, during its present session (December, 1854,) with the object of obtaining the countenance of that body to a scheme for constructing a railroad from Canada, through British territory, to the shore of the Pacific Ocean. When this great work is once seriously commenced—and commenced it assuredly soon will be, and completed too; for the route proposed is declared to be the only practicable one, for the purpose, across the continent—the only obstacle in the way of an immediate and complete political union of the whole of British North America, will have been removed. The Empire for which the foundation is here furnished, would be inferior in extent only to the Russian, the Chinese, and the Brazilian empires; and in commanding position, its advantages would be equal to those of all the three combined. Any attempt to define the future capabilities of British America, if compactly united under a single, local government, would require a lengthened investigation of the resources of the country, and would involve much speculation. Taking the least favorable accounts of the resources of the imperfectly explored territories which it contains, the country would be quite capable, at a moderate calculation, and without making any allowance for the constantly increasing facilities with which intellectual culture furnishes man to provide for his



own sustenance, of supporting a population of 100 millions. Taking this in connection with the fact of its unrivalled geographical position, as a commercial and maritime power, we may form some idea of what British America *may* become.

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In departing from the question of the necessity for a Union of the Provinces to take up that of their Constitution under such a Union, the writer feels that he is beginning to step upon ground hitherto but imperfectly explored. Nearly every one seems to be impressed with a sense of the necessity for something being done to bring the Provinces into closer connection with each other. A vast deal has been said on the subject, in this its general aspect; but very little upon the practical details. When it has been spoken of, it has been most frequently as a *Federal* Union; but without any reason being given for the application of that epithet, or any argument to prove that that particular kind of Union is the most desirable. It is sufficiently obvious that any closer Union, if to exist at all, must be either a *Federal* Union, according to the usual acceptation of that term upon this continent, or an *absolute, legislative* one.

The presumption which seems to exist, in so many minds, that the Union contemplated must be a Federal one, is, no doubt, founded upon our contiguity to the United States. We are accustomed to see, in that great republic—our nearest neighbor, and that with which our intercourse is most frequent—the most remarkable example of a Federal Union which the world has probably ever seen. But it will be difficult to find any argument deducible from the history, or condition, of that republic, to favor the establishing of a similar Confederation in British America. The foundation of the Federal Constitution of the United States, was framed to suit the prejudices of the thirteen States which originally



formed the North American Confederation; not because, reasoning upon sound political principles, it was the most desirable Constitution for the country. But, although not the result of deliberative design, neither has it grown up gradually out of the circumstances and necessities of the country; and it remains yet to be proved that it is the one best suited to those circumstances and necessities. A Confederation had been previously attempted in which each State, completely independent in itself, delegated, to the central authority, such of its power as that State pleased. That share was, at the very outset, extremely insignificant; but, as time elapsed, it rapidly lessened and finally became a merely nominal portion. When the Confederation was on the eve of entire dissolution, and whilst the country, involved in internal difficulties and with crippled resources, was yet fearful of attack from foreign powers, it was deemed indispensable to do *something* towards the consolidation of its strength. Between the requirements of the collective body and the prejudices of the individual States, a compromise was, at length, effected; and in the words of De Tocqueville, "the strict rules of logic were evaded," and a Federal Constitution was formed, the principal and most characteristic articles of which were "contrary to the spirit of Constitutional Government." It will be well for the statesmen of British America, before taking any active steps towards a Union of the Provinces, to ascertain if, since 1789, some progress has not been made in the science of Constitutional Government, as well as in all other sciences.

Before enquiring into a Federal Union of the North American Provinces, it may be well to look into the question of its practicability. To form a Federal Union upon the "American" model, each Provincial Legislature and Executive, as at present constituted, must be expected to degrade itself, in some degree, by yielding to the corresponding Federal body, the possession of the supreme, internal power.



If the Union were proposed in this shape, to the several Legislatures, it is more than probable that one very serious obstacle would be started, at the outset. It is but natural that a man engaged voluntarily in any occupation, should feel a great repugnance to raising up another to preside over, and direct him, in carrying on that very occupation, whilst he himself is to take a step lower down. However consonant to reason such a course may be, under certain circumstances, it must be, in almost every case, extremely humiliating to the feelings. The individual supposed will, particularly if in difficulty, scarcely object to associating another with himself for successfully carrying on the occupation in question; but as for giving his place to another and occupying a subordinate position himself, such a step will scarcely be submitted to until he is driven to the last extremity. What is true with regard to an individual will also hold good with regard to a collection of individuals, even where, as in the present case, it consists of a grave, deliberative, parliamentary assembly. The Legislature of Nova Scotia, for instance, may perceive nothing derogatory to its dignity, or hurtful to its feelings, in uniting, bodily and with powers unimpaired, with those of Canada and New Brunswick; but it is scarcely to be supposed that it will, without many internal throes, curtail its own powers and privileges for the purpose of raising up another legislative body similar, but superior, to itself.

But, presume that no such obstacles will be created by the Provincial Legislatures; and that the Federal Parliament and Federal Government are unanimously decided upon,—What is to be the prerogative of that Government; and upon what objects is that Parliament to legislate? Of what powers *can* the several Provincial Legislatures divest themselves to bestow upon the Federal Legislature? It is presumed that each Province would expect to retain the entire control and management of its internal affairs. If it is not to do so,



upon what principle can it, in one instance, retain the management of its own peculiar affairs, and, in others, yield such management to another, in this respect, concurrent authority? It is clear that, in this matter of the management of the internal affairs of each Province, there could be no division of authority amicably and satisfactorily agreed upon, in the first place; and if agreed upon at all, it could only lead to clashing of rival claims with no prospect of a generally beneficial result.

It will scarcely be contended, in any quarter, that a Union involving an arrangement of this kind is either practicable, or desirable. If then the Federal Government is not to interfere with the proper, internal affairs of the separate Provinces,—what shall be its powers, and upon what objects shall it be exercised? We are here led to a view of the striking dissimilarity between the political condition and circumstances of the British North American Colonies and those of any Confederation of States which has ever existed. The aim and object, in the formation of every such Confederation, has been with reference to its *foreign* relations. With scarcely an exception, the authority of the Federal Government, in such unions, has been limited exclusively to the management of what, in political parlance, are called “foreign affairs:” and to the exercise of such powers as are indispensable to that management. The Federal authorities, in the United States, have, according to the letter of the Constitution, a more extensive power of supervision over the individual States, and more numerous rights of interference in the internal affairs of the collective body, than have ever been entrusted to any other Federal Government. And what are the powers of the Federal Government in that country? First, as the main object for which the Union itself was formed, we find the exclusive power to make war, and, for that purpose, to raise and equip armies and fleets; to make peace, and to conclude treaties of commerce with



foreign powers ; and as indispensable requisites for the exercise of these powers, the further power of levying taxes. These, it is quite obvious, have reference *only* to the foreign relations of the Confederation. The powers of the Federal Government to interfere in what are exclusively the internal affairs of the Union, are few and inconsiderable. The principal are those of controlling the Post Office, and enacting patent and copyright laws. Besides these, authority over all territories belonging to the Union, but not included in any individual State, is vested exclusively in the Federal Government.

It would be extremely difficult—would it not be impossible?—to extend the prerogatives of a Federal Government, in the Provinces, one inch beyond the limits within which they are confined in that republican Confederation, without bringing it into immediate and dangerous collision with those of the individual Provinces. But how far must the prerogatives of the Provincial Federal Government fall within those limits ! From the position of the Provinces as British Colonies, their central Government could not, without some very material modification of their present relations with the Mother Country, have the power of making war and of concluding treaties of peace and commerce, on its own account. The possession of the right to exercise that power, and to make provision for its exercise, is that which gives standing to the Federal Government of the United States ; and brings it what respect it does possess from the individual States. The Provincial Federal Government not having this right, and consequently having no power to raise and equip armies and fleets, and to construct and control works of national defence, the only power left for it to exercise, would be—following, when possible, the model of the United States—those of managing the Post Office ; and those of legislating upon questions of naturalization, patent, and copyright. It could not be permitted to levy taxes beyond the mere requirements



of its own civil list. An inevitable consequence of this would be, that impost duties and other considerable sources of revenue, in the different Provinces, would still be under their separate control. Then there would necessarily be separate customs establishments, and conflicting, commercial regulations, as at present. It is obvious that *it would never pay* to keep up a Federal Government, however moderate the expense of doing so, to perform such comparatively unimportant duties. But, apart from all considerations of expense, such an institution, thus almost objectless and powerless, would become at once, an object of contempt; and would be practically no Government at all.

But in consenting to a Union of the Provinces, of whatever nature such Union might be, the Imperial Government would probably be ready to yield to them a largely increased share of national privileges, attended with proportionate, national responsibilities. Great Britain obviously desires, even now, to bestow upon these Provinces the charge of providing and sustaining the naval and military forces necessary to their security against internal disorder and foreign aggression. The bestowal of this charge would alone, it cannot be doubted, give to the Federal Government an important rank as a *national* Government; and would ensure it a great degree of moral weight in every section of the Confederation. It is further probable, and certainly very desirable, that, in the event of a Provincial Union, the immense tract known as the Hudson Bay Company's Territories, or Rupert's Land, would very soon come under the immediate control of the central Government. If that Union were a Federal one, this important acquisition to its exclusive jurisdiction would certainly both raise and strengthen its position. But both these conditions—one of them certainly an essential one—to the successful maintenance of a Federal Government, rest upon probabilities pending in the uncertain future; and upon probabilities over which those most interested in the Union have no control.



But let the Imperial Government guarantee both conditions: then upon what terms is the Federal Constitution to be formed? Upon what plan is the Federal Government, on the one hand, to be balanced against those of the individual Provinces, on the other? Which is to be the rule; and which the exception; upon points of authority, which shall be the principal; and which the subordinate? Such questions must be extremely difficult to answer, with the view of organizing a Federal Government in any country; but in British America, owing to its peculiar, political position, they are especially so. Yet these are matters which must be settled before such a Union can go into operation. To leave them otherwise, would be to throw the whole Confederation into a state of complete anarchy. If unlimited, superior, and general powers are to be given to the Federal Government, whilst those of the separate Provinces shall be limited, subordinate, and specific, it is clear that the present Provincial Constitutions must be nullified, and others, entirely new and essentially different, substituted for them. Hitherto each Province has legislated under the conviction that it had the right to legislate upon all matters immediately affecting its own rights and interests; and has, at various times, assumed the exclusive right to do so. Under such an arrangement as that now alluded to, such legislation would be restricted to certain classes of subjects; and even confined within narrow limits as to them. The possession of the superior and unlimited power by the general Government would inevitably lead to the extension of its exercise over the local Governments; and these latter would soon become mere shadows, and the position of each Province would be substantially the same as if the Union had been a Legislative, not a Federal, one, in the first place. Let the powers of the Provincial Governments be unlimited as to object, and those of the Federal Government be restricted, and a sweeping change is still necessary in each Provincial Constitution,



inasmuch as it must be so materially modified as to allow another Constitution—the Federal one—to operate side-by-side with it, and upon the same community of interests. And here, as in the other case, there is every probability of the equilibrium, between the general and the local Governments, being speedily destroyed. The Federal Government, limited as to its objects and with circumscribed authority, must be further necessarily straitened, in this latter respect, from being itself the governing power of a Colony, *not of an independent country*. It will, therefore, be wanting in moral weight, as well as in recognised, constitutional authority, to hold its nominal subordinates in check. If, therefore, a rivalry of interests should spring up between different Provinces, the central Government would find itself incapable of holding them long together; and would soon become itself an object of contempt to them all.

It is certain that either the general or the local Government must be superior; and one, or the other, or both, must be restricted as to jurisdiction. But it must be remembered that there is yet a *third* whose claims are to be considered. Whether or not the Federal and local Governments may, in any one Province, be so nicely balanced by an artificial system of checks and counter checks, that one cannot annihilate the other, it certainly seems but reasonable to suppose that, when the Imperial Government claims its share in the division of authority, the most skilful manufacturer of Constitutions will despair of framing such a one as will ensure the “balance of power” between the three. And if such a thing ever should be attempted, and disputes should arise, as they undoubtedly must, between the three ruling powers, it will puzzle the most clear-headed and conscientious British American to ascertain which of the members of this political trinity is most entitled to his allegiance, or how it is to be divided between them. If the Imperial Government is to occupy a position on the soil of British America, on or near



a level with those exercising Federal and Provincial authority; and to exercise a direct interference in its internal affairs, conjointly with them,—then a state of constant discord must ensue from the clashing of conflicting rights and rival interests thus brought together. If it is not to exercise that interference except in cases of dispute between the Federal and Provincial authorities, but is to have “appellate jurisdiction” in all such cases, the effect will be virtually to place the Confederated Provinces completely at the mercy of Imperial statesmen. This interference from without, and by men unacquainted, in a great measure, with the merits of the questions under discussion, is a point upon which British Americans are, at present, particularly sensitive; and they are much more disposed to curtail than to extend it. There is no reason to suppose that, in the event of a Union, such a disposition would be at all lessened. But when such disputes did arise between the Federal and Provincial authorities, or between different Provinces, who would decide them? If the adjudicating power, in such cases, is not to come from without, the presumption is that it will be vested in a Supreme Court, as in the United States. The vesting of such a power in a civil, judicial body, would be another sweeping innovation upon the British Constitution, which recognises no higher authority than Parliament as entitled to deal with questions strictly constitutional. But, apart from these considerations, such a Court must, in cases of serious difficulty,—the only cases in which the interposition of its authority would be desirable,—prove inefficient; for it cannot possess the power to enforce its own decrees. At all events, the creation of a Court endowed with such authority, would be to establish a *fourth*, independent ruling power over the people of British America; and, of course, would make still more complicated the complication of difficulties previously existing, and which must always exist where any plurality of rulers have concurrent authority over a nation.



Let us suppose all obstacles to the practicability of a Federal Union to be removed. Is *such* a Union desirable? The objections to the Federal form of Government are numerous; but the principal of them are owing to a few general causes, simple and easily apprehended. It may be sufficient to point out these causes; for whoever will allow his attention to dwell upon them, for a brief space, can scarcely require a guide to indicate, or explain, their numerous results. Some of those objections have been already hinted at. Under a Federal Constitution, there must be a want of cohesiveness between the various confederated bodies; and consequently of stability and strength in the Federal Government itself—conditions which, under certain circumstances which are by no means of rare occurrence in the history of any nation, must soon prove fatal to the existence of the Federal Government. Where two Governments exercise concurrent authority, as is done by the Federal and separate State Governments, questions must arise, even under ordinary circumstances, which will bring them into direct collision. Were such differences to arise upon general questions—upon points of policy affecting, in an equal degree, every section of the Confederation, the people of the individual State whose Government was at issue with the central Government, would be quite as likely to give their support to the one ruling power, as to the other; therefore, in such a case—if such ever should occur—the chances of any serious injury resulting from such differences, are comparatively slight. Yet even, in this case, there would be such a chance. But such collisions would be much more likely to take place upon questions of a local nature, in which the people of the disputant State felt themselves directly and, it may be, peculiarly interested. Here, from the nature of the point at issue, the tendency of affairs would be to make the difference between the antagonistic Governments grow wider. The people of the individual State would here rally round the local Government, and support it to the last extre-



mity ; for its interests and their own, would be identical. The political organization of the State, furnishing evidence of the strength of its position relative to the disputed point, and also a certain means of making its power felt, would, almost certainly, prevent its yielding without a struggle. People are, almost invariably, more jealous of any curtailment of their local rights, or privileges, than of those of a more general nature. A national insult will pass unheeded, where a slight—perhaps an imaginary one—to a town council, or similar local body, will raise a perfect storm of indignation. There are always local patriots enough, in every community, to promote the hostile feelings naturally excited towards any power supposed to be adverse to the interests of that community. Political, internal disputes, are usually more difficult of adjustment and more protracted in continuance, than those springing from a nation's foreign relations. In cases where such occur, we find both the opposing parties uncompromising, implacable, and obstinate, in the last degree, as the history of all civil wars abundantly testifies. Thus where a rupture is once made between the local and the general Government, it cannot reasonably be supposed that anything but coercive measures will bring them together again. Probably if the members of the Federal and local legislatures had, in the first instance, belonged to the same legislative body, the question between them would, by an interchange of views and by mutual explanations, have been satisfactorily and amicably arranged, after a few hours' discussion. But where they, separately and at a distance from each other, and each collective body with its particular bias, legislate upon the same subject, there is little probability of its merits being fairly discussed by either body ; and, under such circumstances, each is extremely liable to mistake, or distort, the opinions and feelings of the other. When the Confederation embraces a considerable number of States, or when its members are separated by geographical position,



local prejudices, or interests, it is quite obvious that the probabilities of a collision are largely increased. When a dispute of this kind comes to an open rupture, whichever of the two conflicting parties may prove successful, the result cannot but prove highly injurious to the welfare of the Confederation, and ultimately fatal to its existence *as a Confederation*. The invariably disastrous consequences to society generally, of a serious civil contest of this kind, need only be alluded to.

If, in such a struggle, the Federal Government prove victorious, it will take care, by some means, or other, to weaken the power of the refractory State and abridge its privileges, with a view to lessen the probability of any future collision. The discomfited State, on the other hand, cannot but regard itself in the light of a conquered country; and, as such, any terms whatever imposed by the Federal authorities, will be felt as an infringement of its constitutional rights. Its position and still existing, political organization, will afford opportunities of both evading those terms and openly setting them at defiance. Thus, if the Federal Government persists in the course first adopted, jealousies and heart-burnings must continue to exist on the part of both the contending parties; and open hostilities must become frequent until the individuality of the single State is entirely destroyed.

But suppose the single State in question proves the better of the two in the contest. This is a state of affairs which the evidence of history proves to be the much more probable result of such a contest; and the reasons why it must be so, it is not difficult to discover. In this case, the General Government, being foiled by that which is, nominally, its subordinate, must, in consequence, lose immeasurably both in moral weight and physical strength. The successful issue, on the part of the single State, of one contest with the Federal Government, will naturally lead to renewed contests, on its own part, and to the encouragement of similar attempts, on the part of others, until the Federal Government must, in the



natural course of things, become utterly powerless—an object of contempt both at home and abroad ; and each individual State will become, to all intents and purposes, an independent country.

It may be said that sectional revolts may take place in any country not having a Federal Government. True, they *may* do so ; but the probabilities of their taking place are infinitely less than where the Federal form exists. When the Government is not a Federal one, the popular representatives from every section of the country meeting in the same Parliament, their local prejudices are softened down by this general intercourse ; differences are compromised at their inception ; misunderstandings are, almost immediately, discovered and rectified ; and the whole country assumes the character, in the estimation of those representatives, of a compact unity in which the interests of each section are considered as subordinate to the interests of the whole. If a complete disruption of the representatives of any one section of the country did take place, it could not, in any ordinary case, be productive of very serious results ; because the complete, political local organization, which, under a Federal Government, would make such disaffection dangerous, would here be wanting. Where but a single Parliament exists, serious disaffection and open revolt can take place only where some flagrant act of tyranny is perpetrated upon the mass of the people : under a Federal Government, they may and do result from local prejudices, from grievances merely imaginary, from misconception of ideas, and from a mere spirit of insubordination.

Another evil of this jealous attitude naturally assumed by the general, and the various local, Governments, towards each other, is its demoralizing effect upon the people generally. Each of these Governments, as a natural consequence of its relative position, will endeavor, by every possible means, to lessen the aggressive power of the others—such a procedure



being the most easy and effective mode of hindering that power ever being turned against the particular Government in question. When all are thus striving, with the same object in view, the result must be—unless a state of *open* warfare occurs, to raise and strengthen one State by annihilating others—that they will weaken each other ; and this weakening influence must continue incessantly until arrested by some revolution completely changing the relative position of the States participating in it. It need scarcely be said, that a Government cannot be thus weakened with reference to the exercise of its power in one particular direction only. Its strength must be diminished in every respect. It becomes incapable of discharging its legitimate functions within its own territory, and when its authority is unquestioned from without. Not only does its Executive find itself deficient in the actual, physical means of enforcing the laws ; but it soon proves to be comparatively destitute of moral influence among the people over whom it nominally presides ; for when a Government is thus so notoriously hedged in and fettered as to be incapable of acting with requisite freedom, people soon lose all respect for it, and particularly for that branch which interferes most directly with their personal inclinations. The Executive is, therefore, incapable of discharging the duties which the Constitution imposes upon it ; and if the State does not gradually lapse into a condition of complete, political anarchy and social barbarism, it is because the sound, moral sense and high intellectual development of a large majority of the people, produce, from the outset, an opposite tendency.

This disrespect which, under a Federal Constitution, a person is likely to entertain towards the constituted, ruling powers of the land, is increased by the two-fold allegiance which, in strictness, he *owes* to the Federal and local Governments. Cases must frequently occur in which a question will arise as to which of the two has the right, and which has not the right, to exert a direct control over his actions. This



being the fact, he will naturally set himself to work, when he wishes those actions to be entirely uncontrolled, to play an adroit game between the two, and eventually, to evade the authorities of both. The facility which such a state of things affords for thus playing off one set of constituted authorities against the other, must leave upon the mind of the individual in question anything but a feeling of respect for either.

A further objection to the Federal form of Government may be found in the fact, that it renders widely dissimilar, in different parts of the country, certain institutions which the welfare of the people requires to be everywhere alike. The difference in the Constitutions of the various Confederate States, is itself an evil of no ordinary magnitude, particularly when attended by a difference in the elective franchise. But the principal evil of this class is, that, owing to a number of separate and independent Legislatures, there must be a like number of distinct, legal codes; and this amongst a people all professing to belong to one and the same nation. That all civil laws—with the exception of a few *necessarily* local regulations which need not be specially indicated—should be general in their application, throughout the *whole* nation which acknowledges them, and that the mode of administering them should be uniform to the same extent, are incontrovertible; and are also too obvious to require any arguments in proof. The evils which must result from any other arrangement, are too numerous to be specified in these few pages; but any one may easily ascertain them by tracing out, under the guidance of his own reason, the natural consequences of such *other* arrangement; or by noticing its actual results in those countries where it is now in operation. The existence, within the territories of a single nation, of a multiplicity of laws—each having a distinct, local application—upon almost every question of human rights; and of a plurality of courts—each peculiarly constituted and having its peculiar rules of



practice—administering those laws ; must, in any case, hamper the ordinary administration of justice, promote the growth of crime, and seriously inconvenience commercial intercourse between the various parts of those territories. In proportion as those territories are geographically near to each other, and as they are alike in climate, natural productions, and the social condition of their inhabitants, those evils will be multiplied and more keenly felt. In fact, one of the principal reasons why a Union of the Provinces is desirable, is that it may remove these evils from them. It does not very materially affect the result that the differences in laws, or in the administration of them, are only slight : that there is a difference at all, is what makes the difficulty. But the natural consequence of independent, local legislation, is to make those differences greater and more numerous. This kind of legislation has the additional evil effect of cherishing those local prejudices, and feelings of separate interests which, as already observed, tend so decidedly to the estrangement of each member of a Confederation from its fellows.

It may be argued against the validity of these objections to the Federal form of Government generally, that the rapid increase in power, wealth, and general prosperity, which has taken place in the great Confederation of the United States of America, proves them to be not well-founded. It is no part of the object of these remarks to reason, or to speculate upon, the probable future of that republic. It may, however, be observed generally that because the United States have grown so rapidly, under a Federal Constitution, it does not, by any means, follow that such of the peculiarities of that Constitution as are above indicated, have no evil effect. As well might it be argued—as, indeed, it often and vainly has been—that because, under a system of high protective duties, Great Britain rose to the position of first nation on earth, in power, wealth, and prosperity ; therefore such a system must be a sound one, and should not have been abolished. The



United States have become great and prosperous in spite of the causes alluded to, not in consequence of them. It might, with much more propriety, be argued, that the Federal Constitution of the United States furnished a reason why that republic has not, as already shown, grown in the same ratio as the British North American Provinces.

That the last of the objections urged against Federal Governments is found to be a real objection, in the United States, few persons acquainted with that country will pretend to dispute. As to the argument that Federal institutions tend to the political debility and dissolution of the Union wherein they exist, there is nothing to be found in the history, or present condition, of those States relative to each other, to controvert it. The partial success which has attended the working of the Federal Constitution, in that republic, has been mainly owing, not to any special virtue in the Constitution itself, but to the peculiar circumstances and feelings of the people—already alluded to—which led, in the first place, to the adoption of that Constitution. But notwithstanding the favorable feeling of the people towards it, and their sense of the necessity of conforming to its provisions, at the outset, frequent examples of the mutual jealousies of the States, of the injuries they inflict upon each other, and of the inability of the Federal Government to reduce to obedience any one of them which may evince a spirit of insubordination, are to be found in the history of that Confederation. As notorious and flagrant instances of this latter manifestation of weakness, may be cited the refusal of the Eastern States, during the war of 1812, to furnish, in obedience to the Federal Government and in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, their contingent of militia to aid in carrying on the war; the protracted and successful resistance of South Carolina to the confederated authorities, upon the tariff question of 1832—a resistance which became successful through acts of open rebellion, on the part of that State;



and the "melancholy acknowledgment" made by a member of the Washington Cabinet, but a few years since, to a British Minister, that the Federal Government found itself unable to restrain the piratical expeditions of Louisiana. The population of the United States is scattered over an immense and productive territory, affording to all abundant facilities for providing for their most pressing wants, and hindering those clashings of vital interests which convulse society and endanger its peace, in more densely populated countries; the frontiers of that republic are in contact with the territories of no hostile and dangerous power; and its history, as an independent power, has not yet extended over a period of three-quarters of a century. The Federal Constitution has, therefore, not been fairly tried in that republic; and the partial trial which it has had, has been under the most favorable circumstances. The results of that partial trial are anything but favorable to the reputation of such a Constitution; and when the inevitable progress of events shall subject the United States to those internal social convulsions and complications of foreign relations which have proved the most trying ordeal of all Governments, in older nations, we have certainly good grounds for believing that that Constitution, if it shall have existed so long, will be found utterly inadequate to the wants of the country.

On turning to the other side of the question, we find that the benefits derived from a Federal Constitution, are patent—so much so as to be discernible by the most superficial observer—and are traceable to a single cause. The evil effects, when carried to an extreme, of the principle of centralization in carrying on the operations of Government, are well known. The local interests of every section of the country considerably removed from the centre of authority, must, under an ultra centralization system, suffer severely. The Federal system, by dividing the country into certain sections, and giving to each the management, to a great extent,



of its own local affairs, has a directly opposite tendency, and does not conduce to the prosperity of any one of those sections at the expense of the others. The mode of its operation to produce this effect, is too obvious to require explanation. Two further observations must be made, however, in connection with this branch of the subject. First, this management, of local affairs is, in each case, conducted by a power, which, at the same time, exercises certain other functions highly detrimental to the welfare of the nation at large, as already shown. Secondly, these purely local affairs can, it is quite obvious, be managed equally well, if not much better, by a local power *not* endowed with those objectionable functions.

The preceding remarks have reference only to such a Constitution as we find in operation in the United States of America, not because such a one is the form most usually adopted by Confederations—it being, in strict point of fact, not a Federal Constitution at all; but because it is the least objectionable, with reference to the case of British America, of any which have hitherto borne that name. Nearly every former Confederation, besides having been formed with reference *only* to the foreign relations of the Union, has combined States having an entirely distinct nationality.

Then as to a Federal Union such as that of the United States, the inferences intended to be drawn from the foregoing remarks are, that such a Union, if attempted, would be repugnant to the feelings of the several Provincial Legislatures; that, if not so repugnant to the Colonies, such a Union could not go into operation except by virtue of a divesture of authority, on the part of the Mother Country, which is of a problematical occurrence; that, supposing this condition fulfilled, such a Union could be effected only by a radical change in the Provincial Constitutions, making that of the elective body, and those of the various subordinate Provinces, all essentially different from the Constitution which now



prevails in each ; that, if effected, there is no probability of its working with even ordinary success, owing to the complication of machinery employed and the multiplicity of interests involved ; and that, if, by any means, some of these interests were withdrawn and this machinery simplified, so as to make a Federal Government at all practicable in British America, the peculiar advantages derivable from a Government of that form, would be more than counterbalanced by the disadvantages.

None of these objections are applicable to the plan of a *Legislative Union* of the Provinces ; if, indeed, any valid objection to it can be found. Such a Union could take place immediately, and without any change whatever in the Constitution which each now possesses, or in their relation to the Mother Country. No political movement, pregnant with such important results, could be more simple ; nor, if a Union is so much desired as a very general expression of opinion renders evident, more easy. The formation of the Union would, in fact, necessitate no greater change, in any Province, than a mere change in the seat of Government. It would not necessarily follow that, from this centralization of Provincial Legislative and Executive authorities, the local interests of remote portions of the Union would suffer, as is generally found to be the case under such circumstances. Reforms in internal policy have already been adopted in a part of British America, which, if made general, would effectually prevent any such injurious result. The principle of Municipal Corporations, which has been acted upon with such complete success in Canada, and which is now so extensively advocated in the Lower Provinces, furnishes ample security against any abuses of the centralization system. The plan of having the whole country divided into counties ; and then again into townships, towns, and cities, each forming a Municipal Corporation and having the entire management of its exclusively local affairs ; would provide, under the proposed Union, a



more immediate and effective protection to local interests than could be afforded by that of allowing each Province to retain, for that purpose, its present cumbrous and expensive government machinery. At the same time, no one of those Municipalities, however perfectly organized, could ever become dangerous, or even very troublesome, as a rebel against the authority of the general Government, a statement which certainly could not be predicated of any Province, under a continuance of its present, political organization. An arrangement of this kind would indeed be, in one sense, a Federal Union; but it would form a Confederation, not of five Provinces, but of some 140 counties and cities; and one differing essentially, both in its nature and operation, from any which has preceded it.

It is more than probable, that public undertakings would be found necessary requiring the co-operation of several of these Municipalities; and that questions of a purely local nature would arise, requiring the joint consideration of several of them. To provide for such cases, the principle of County Corporations could be carried a step further and applied to certain larger sections of country, each comprising several counties; so that all legislation of that tedious, burdensome, and frequently injudicious character which is employed about "private bills"—all, in short, which is purely local in its character, *but no more than this*, would be thrown off the central Parliament and entrusted to those who are best qualified to deal with it. An arrangement of precisely this nature, for the United Kingdom, has been, in a late number of the Westminster Review, ably advocated by a writer who, as a liberal and philosophical expounder of political science, is probably unequalled by any of the present century. It is spoken of as a scheme the realization of which, in that country, can be hoped for only in the remote future. Here the case is different. Political changes can be easily and immediately effected, in a new country such as this, which it



would require many years of difficulty to impose upon the prejudices which exist in the British Isles.

As already observed, the formation of a Legislative Union necessitates no material change in the present Constitutions of the Provinces. The incorporation of counties is not an essential, *preparatory* measure. Without any extension of that system beyond the limits within which it now exists in British America, local affairs would be nearly, if not quite, as well managed, and local interests as well protected, even after the Union, as they now are under the disunion. But the scheme of Municipal Corporations furnishes an answer to the only serious objection which can be made to the Union. The extension of municipal rights and privileges to every county in British North America will, doubtless, take place, at no distant day, whether a Legislative Union is ever effected or not. The formation of Municipal Counties, and of those larger and similar organizations already referred to, should, and it can scarcely be doubted, would immediately follow such a Union.

Only two objections have ever been publicly made to a Legislative Union of these Provinces; and they are so nearly groundless as scarcely to require any serious answer. One is, the difference of race which exists among the inhabitants of the Provinces. It is argued that the people of Canada East, being of French origin, would not closely and cordially unite with their Anglo-Saxon fellow subjects. One great object to be obtained by the Union is a complete breaking down of all local prejudices, and a fusion of races, throughout the Provinces. That such would be its speedy result, if the Union were maintained, there can be no doubt; and that it could be maintained is clearly proved by the present condition of Canada itself. Almost every species of disaster was predicted of that country, a few years since, when a Legislative Union of the two Provinces it formerly comprised, was first carried into operation; yet we find that the



closest possible, political union of the two most antagonistic races in British America has been effected in Canada, with complete success, and has been followed by a continuance of prosperity unparalleled in the former history of that country, or in that of any other country on earth.

The other objection is, that much inconvenience would arise from the remoteness of some parts of the United Provinces from the seat of Government, wherever that might be. To this it may be said, that the same objection might be made to the Canadian Union; but no serious inconvenience of this kind is there found to exist. The distance from Quebec, the present capital of Canada, to Sandwich, the county town of Essex, Canada West, is greater than from Quebec to Sydney, the most remote county town in Nova Scotia. When the line of railway between Halifax and Quebec, now actually commenced at the two termini and upon an intermediate section of the line, shall have been completed between those two points, Halifax will virtually be nearer to Quebec, than Antigonish or Annapolis now is to Halifax. That such a railway communication will, within a very few years, be completed, scarce any one now pretends to doubt; and the consummation of the work, so desirable for other reasons as well as those of a political nature, would be hastened by a Legislative Union of the Provinces.

A Union of the Provinces, upon the plan above briefly sketched out, would supply all those wants so keenly felt by British Americans, and which are mentioned in a former part of this pamphlet. It is certainly not too much to say that the *Reformed British Constitution* proposed by that plan is the best suited to the feelings and wants of an intelligent and free people; the best calculated to develop their energies, and promote their prosperity and happiness; the most likely to bind a number of petty, detached nationalities into a compact and powerful empire; in short, the most perfect, of any Constitution which either the mere force of circumstances, or



political foresight, has ever yet put into operation. And for British America, with her immense yet thinly-peopled territories ; her vast, undeveloped resources, and superior geographical position ; united under a Constitution so admirably adapted to extend and consolidate her power, to preserve and promote her prosperity ; it surely would not be presumption to predict a most glorious and happy future.

The accomplishment of the Union will depend almost entirely upon the action of the Provincial Legislatures ; for it is evident that it is now neither the interest, nor the inclination of Great Britain to resist any reasonable demand of the united Provinces. And surely this is not an unreasonable demand, even though it amounts—as it really does—to the formation of them into a compact, powerful, and *virtually independent* State. The time has now arrived—and all interested in this subject feel that it has arrived—when British America must cease to walk in leading strings—to occupy the humble position of a mere dependency of the British Crown. She has now attained her national majority, and possesses a degree of strength and vigor which entitle her to stand *beside* the Mother Country. It is the obvious interest then of Great Britain to draw more closely and firmly the connection between the two, by making it depend solely upon community of interests and obligations of honor ; and to make the Provinces a means of support, not a cause of weakness, to herself, by removing all needless restraints upon their freedom and by aiding in the development of their strength. All this she may do by effecting a Legislative Union of those Provinces, and entrusting to them the entire management of their own local affairs. British America may then become a member of another Confederation upon the vast and widely scattered territories of which “the sun never sets”—a Confederation the grandest that the world ever saw—  
—THE CONFEDERATION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.



political freedom has ever yet put into practice. And for  
 British America, with her immense population, her  
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 that restrain and by acting in the attainment of their  
 interests. All she has to do by choosing a Legislature  
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 advancement of their own best interests. British America may  
 then become a member of another Confederation and the  
 last and chiefly anxious partners in which she may  
 — a Constitution the greatest that the world ever saw  
 — the Government of the British Empire.



A UNION OF THE COLONIES  
OF  
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA,  
CONSIDERED NATIONALLY.

1856.

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BRITISH AMERICA has its fair share of the political evils which seem to be inseparable from the condition of even a free people, living under a constitutional Government, so long as that people remains imperfectly educated and blemished by the moral imperfections which have ever characterized human nature. We have our occasional victories of *wrong over right*, our unreasonable party animosities, our selfish and noisy political factions, our narrow prejudices of race, creed, and locality, using the most valuable and dearly cherished institutions of the country to inflict injuries upon it. But there is reason to believe, and a consolation in believing, that even among those who take the most prominent and active part in this turmoil and clashing of selfish interests, there is, beneath the narrower selfish passions so patent in their ordinary conduct, a broad substratum of patriotism and national spirit. For instance, amid all our sectional jealousies and party rivalries, there is one great national movement which has been proposed, and which, at least, has not met



with *disapproval* in any part of British America. We allude to the proposed Union of the British North American Colonies.

It is true that this question of Union has never yet been brought very directly home to the British American people. They have never yet been called upon to decide, positively and immediately, whether it shall take place, or not. But the proposed Union has been, for some time, pretty freely canvassed by the press and by leading public men, in all parts of British America, and has been formally submitted to the consideration of the legislatures in two of the Provinces—Canada and Nova Scotia;—and the entire absence, as yet, of any public indication of opposition to it, is a very significant fact. But although it may be said—as, for many reasons, we believe it reasonably may—that the leading statesmen of British America are profoundly impressed with the importance of the projected Union, and that a majority of the well-informed classes look forward to its consummation with favorable eyes; still it is important that the masses should be instructed with regard to it—still more important that all classes should be impressed with a sense of the necessity for early action in the matter. It is but natural that pressing and immediate wants should engage more attention than future advantages; that our Provincial politicians should give more consideration to questions of local interest than to those more remote ones of national importance. It is the duty of those who can perceive the evils at times arising from this ever-narrowing policy, to endeavor to restrain it within its proper limits. It is therefore the duty of such, in this instance, to lead the minds of the great body of the people away from party squabbles and exclusively local legislation, to a consideration of this important subject of British American nationality. To do this, is something which comes especially within the province of the press.

A Union of these Colonies, considered upon broad, national



grounds, not with reference to its bearing upon existing class grievances and local interests, is a somewhat difficult subject to write upon. That the British North American Provinces should be politically combined into a single compact nation, appears almost self-evident. There are no arguments, few, if any, plausible objections, against such a project, to be combated. Why were they ever disunited? It was accident, not design, which led to their original organization as separate Colonies. The territory which they comprise fell under the dominion of the British Crown at different periods, a fact which accounts in part for their separate organization. In the early stages of their history as Colonies, they consisted but of so many wildernesses, each containing a small *nucleus* of peopled territory. These settled spots were far distant from each other, separated by unexplored wilds, and, with the means of communication in use at that day, intimate intercourse between them was impossible. A separate Colonial Government for each was indispensable. The causes which rendered separate Governments necessary, in the first instance, are now removed. There is now no reason for a continuance of them unless we admit the validity of that last and poorest argument which ultra conservatism makes use of against every projected reform: "it must continue to be, because it always has been."

The natural barriers which once separated these Provinces from each other, are now in a great measure removed; those which remain are only artificial. They are like brothers who, owing to some misfortune, have been far removed from each other in infancy, each scarcely conscious of the other's existence; but who now, when in the full vigor of manhood, find themselves face to face, conscious of the natural ties which exist between them. For brothers, under such circumstances, to remain coldly aloof from each other, in accordance with the most chilling conventionalities ever observed in society between utter strangers, instead of cordially joining



hands with the determination of spending the remainder of their days in mutual intercourse and fraternal love, would be scarcely more ridiculous than for the North American Provinces to remain longer sundered by the useless forms of a plurality of Colonial Governments. These Provinces now find themselves face to face. The wildernesses which once separated them have been prostrated, or penetrated in every direction, by the stalwart backwoodsman; the savages who once infested those forests have ceased to be a terror, and may be said no longer to exist; the obstacles which distance and which gulfs and seas formerly interposed to their mutual intercourse, are now in a great measure removed by modern science and skill. The communication between any two of the Provinces is now almost as free as that which exists between the different parts of any one of them; and an immediate effect of their political Union would be to make it quite as much so. Should any persons object to the distance of the remote sections of British America from each other as presenting great obstacles to the practicability of such a Union, they should bring to recollection the facilities which science and the engineering skill of the present day, as compared with that of the past, afford for overcoming all such difficulties. Within the memory of men still living, it required as much time to journey from Sydney to Halifax, or from the coast of Bay Chaleur to Fredericton as is now required to go from Halifax to Toronto. For near a hundred years after the Union of England and Scotland, the journey or voyage from Edinburgh to London was not usually made in less than a week. By passing across the State of Maine, Quebec or Montreal may now be reached from Halifax in thirty-six hours. But without going into a foreign country at all, when the railroads now in course of construction in the Lower Provinces are completed, the journey from Halifax to Quebec may be made with ease and comfort in three days. Complete the chain of railway which all believe must, within a very few years,



bind the Provinces together, whether they become politically more closely connected or not; and the time will not occupy more than thirty-six hours, at the slowest rate of railway travelling. When the construction of this one wanting link in the railway chain, comprising the distance from Miramichi, or Woodstock, in New Brunswick, to Trois Pistoles, in Canada, shall have been undertaken and completed, the time occupied in travelling over the entire length of the Provinces, from 1800 to 2000 miles, will not be more than half that now required to make the journey from one extremity of Nova Scotia to the other, along our ordinary post roads.

Again, the facilities for communication by letter, within and between the Colonies, have undergone a still more striking improvement. Ten years ago, it required at least ten days for a letter to pass between Halifax and the westernmost towns of Canada. The invention of the electric telegraph has effected a great revolution in this matter. There are no two towns, or villages, of a thousand inhabitants, in these Provinces which *do* not now communicate with each other, by telegraph, in half a day, and which *may* not do so in one hour.

The progress of their individual development has now brought the Provinces into immediate contact with each other. They are separated by no natural obstacles to their union; they are subject to the same Crown; they are governed according to the same constitutional principles; they enjoy substantially the same laws; they have the same great interests in common; they are every day attracted more closely towards each other by commercial intercourse and fraternal feeling; and there is no good reason, no plausible pretext for longer upholding the artificial barriers which still hinder them from becoming *one* to all intents and purposes.

British North America occupies, at the present time, a singularly anomalous position. It presents the spectacle of a country inhabited by a people of whom it is no empty boast



to say they are not inferior in enlightenment and intelligence to any in the world. They enjoy a constitutional Government, have been entrusted with the entire control of all their exclusively internal affairs, and have shown themselves not less capable of self-government than any other people. Yet they have no voice whatever in anything which concerns their relations with foreign countries. British North America comprises, at this moment, the materials of a prosperous and powerful nation, and contains the elements which, under favorable circumstances for development, will speedily make of it an empire inferior in power and influence to no one that has hitherto flourished upon earth. Yet it has no national existence whatever—it is a nonentity in the commonwealth of nations.

On several occasions, the Provinces have experienced not only the mortification but the serious injury to their interests which must naturally attend this peculiarity of their position. In two instances, large portions of our territory have been conceded to the United States. Great Britain gained nothing by the transactions, whilst British America incurred serious losses, and losses which must be felt more and more with the lapse of time. On a more recent occasion, the invaluable fisheries of our country were given away to the United States without any adequate return being made for them. This latter assertion may be denied. It may even be contended that British America has, by its own acts, admitted the justice of the Fishery Treaty of 1854; but the assent of the Provinces to an arrangement from which there was no escape, scarcely amounts to an admission either of the justice, or expediency, of such an arrangement. But without entering into this question at all, it cannot be denied that, in each of these instances, the British Government, whilst treating with a foreign power relative to matters in which the North American section of the Empire was especially—nay, almost exclusively—interested, ignored the existence of these



Provinces. In these instances, the injustice experienced by the Colonies was not of that immediately oppressive character which could provoke, or which would warrant, any rebellious acts on the part of the British Americans; but a consideration of them leads directly to certain inferences which cannot be too deeply impressed upon the minds of our readers. The whole Provinces of North America, as at present organized, have no voice in the British Imperial Government, and have no means of exercising any control over its acts. We know from actual experience that when their interests conflict with those of the single city of Manchester, or of any class, party, or section of Great Britain, they must be disregarded. The latter can make their influence *felt* in the Imperial Parliament; for they are represented there. The former are not so represented, and they have no equivalent means of exerting an influence upon the Imperial Government. Mere remonstrances on their part will be unheeded.

Within the last few weeks, a project of the Imperial Government has been shadowed forth in the Ministerial organ, for transporting the felons of Great Britain to the Hudson Bay Territory. This would be equivalent to making the North American Provinces so many penal Colonies. There is nothing to prevent the transported convicts from making their way direct to Canada, except a toilsome journey such as the hunters and *voyageurs* of Hudsonia think nothing of, a journey which no one who had lived a few months in that territory would consider a serious difficulty in the way of getting out of it, if he were disposed to do so. It has never been the habit of British statesmen to recede from a position once taken upon any point relating to the Colonies; and it is not probable that they will do so in this instance.

The cases just mentioned may, by some persons, not be considered as involving very serious grievances. But admit the principle, and what may it not lead to? We have no security that the dearest interests of British America may



not be sacrificed to further a pet project of some British statesman, or to gratify the desires, or appease the wrath, of some foreign ally. The Colonies possess no means of preventing such a misfortune. Nor is it at all without the bounds of probability that such may occur and be deeply injurious, if not ruinous, to British American interests. In stating such an opinion, and in asserting that the Imperial Government has already, in treating with foreign powers, ignored the interests of these Colonies, we mean to attribute to British statesmen no remarkable degree of moral turpitude, or political baseness. Admit them to be endowed with intellect, wisdom, and moral sense not very far above the average of men, we have no right to expect that they will be very ready to perceive, or evince any remarkable degree of vigor in guarding, the interests of this remote and colonial portion of the Empire. The education of the British statesman must naturally make him intimate only with "Home" politics, certainly not with those of the Colonies. His constant dependence for his position upon the approval of the people of the United Kingdom, ensures his making their welfare his first consideration. That of the Colonies, whose approval, or disapproval, cannot affect him in any way, will be considered a matter of little moment.

How will a Union of the Colonies remedy all this? It will not enable the British Americans, like the people of the United Kingdom, to exert a direct control over members of the Imperial Government. No; but it will give to their country such a standing that no British statesman will believe that he can any longer venture to treat it as a political nonentity, for it would challenge the respect of the Imperial authorities. Nor, in such an event, *could* a British Home Government outrage the feelings, or trample upon the interests of the young nation with impunity. It could not then be considered a sufficient guarantee of the safety of British American interests that a Colonial Secretary sat in the British



Cabinet. Some more special representation in Downing Street, or at St. James's, would then be considered essential when the relations between British America and any foreign power came under discussion. But in whatever way the connecting link between the Mother Country and these Colonies was maintained, the latter—forming, as they would, a compact State embracing a vast territory rich in untold resources, a State advancing in wealth and strength with almost unparalleled strides, and inhabited by a free and aspiring people—would form a nation which *no* outside power *could* venture to injure, or to insult; and if anything of the kind were attempted, British America *would* not submit to it. Although still a dependency of the British Crown and a section of the British Empire, the North American Colonies would then be entitled to and would receive from all foreign powers the consideration and respect due to an independent nation, and to a nation of the first rank. The people of this country would also, *as* British Americans, then receive that consideration among foreigners, the absence of which has been deeply felt and complained of by almost every North American Colonist who has passed beyond the borders of his native Province.

The circumstances in which the North American Colonies are now placed, considered in connection with their future capabilities as compared with those of most other countries, render it incumbent upon them to make the most of their means and opportunities. We mean that it is incumbent upon them, not merely with a view to their own selfish ends, but in order fitly to discharge their responsibilities to the human race in the aggregate. Great and solemn responsibilities seem to be imposed upon British America and a lofty and bright career marked out for it, by the capabilities of its situation. The poetical and popular legend that "Westward the star of empire holds its way" may not be so entirely true as to authorize its employment as a premise in an argu-



ment ; but its truth seems to be borne out in a great measure by the history of the civilized world.

The countries from which the monarchs of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires, in the earliest ages of history, dictated laws to the world, are now among the most desert and barbarous upon earth. The jackal roams undisturbed upon the site of Nineveh, and the crocodile may sport in the waters which sweep over the ruins of Babylon ; and it is considered among the great triumphs of modern learning, skill, and ingenuity that the spot where either of these wondrous cities once stood can now be pointed out. Egypt also, which once from its gigantic palaces radiated wisdom and glory over the world, may now be called figuratively—and is almost literally—a desert. Egypt, although waking in a new life, is governed by a vassal of the weakest sovereign in Europe ; and its social position is but little superior to its political rank. Greece, their successor in the race of civilization and the possession of empire, is now a chaos of marble ruins. As a nation she has just commenced the toilsome task of undoing the work of nineteen centuries of barbarism. The same dark tide has swept over her still mightier successor, Rome.

Coming down to a comparatively modern period, we find the sceptre of the civilized world swayed in turn by various nations of Western Europe ; although now Britain, if any, may claim the rank of mistress of the world. But are we to suppose that Europe will continue to hold that proud position at the head of the world which she has occupied for the last five or six centuries ? In the present aspect of that continent, one may well ask, in some perplexity, where next will the sun of civilization extend its brightest rays ? Where next will Truth take her strongest stand in the great warfare of opinions ? and what country shall next be the instructress of nations and the glory of the world ? Presuming that the development of men, or of nations, in all that can ennoble them, or add to their permanent strength, can take place



only under conditions of civil freedom and security of freedom, the prospects of Europe, for many, many years, appear gloomy in the extreme. The present condition of that quarter of the world is obviously that of a smoldering volcano about to break forth ; and we believe the most of those now living in the world will yet feel the earthquake shocks when the eruption does come. Even now, comparatively silent as Europe is, there is, in almost its every corner, a terrible life and death struggle going on between Liberty and Despotism ; and through the stillness we may frequently hear the growling thunder that forbodes the coming political storm. In France, Italy, the Austrian Empire, and most parts of Germany, we see regal power, long the aggressor, now " with terror and with toil " grappling with the shackled and maddened people to bind yet heavier chains upon them, just as we may have seen a sane man in mortal struggle with a maniac. The condition of Spain, sad although it is, is better than theirs ; for her spoke in Fortune's wheel has, in its revolution, commenced to move upwards. If Russia is more quiet, it is because she is more barbarous ; for there the millions of serfs turn not against the despotic heel that crushes them only because they do not know that they are trodden upon. The Scandinavian nations are cowed by the perpetual menace of Russia,—a power which, like a huge iceberg, sheds a chill over all which hang upon its shores, and threatens every moment, to crush them beneath its weight. But neither the Czar of Russia, nor any other absolute monarch will be able long to repress the uprising of the people of Europe. The maniac, although a maniac, will be free. And, although it may be said as an excuse for holding the people in abject submission, that, like the waters of a river from which a long-standing obstruction has been removed, when once free they will deluge the land and overwhelm every work of human hands that they meet in their torrent-like course, the deluge is none the less inevitable nevertheless.



Pile the dam as high as you will, the waters beyond it will still mount higher ; and the longer the flood is repressed, the more terrible will be its power when freed.

We can but indicate, without attempting to describe those aspects of the affairs of Europe which we believe to bear upon our subject. That the oppressed nationalities of Europe are about commencing openly to battle for freedom, appears all but certain. Every unsuccessful attempt will, it is quite certain, make the condition of that continent worse than it was before. And when the day of final success does come, as come it must, there must still a long and troubled period of probation elapse before Europe can settle down in peace and prosperity ; for it would be as useless to expect a child to leap from his nurse's arms into the rank and society of adult men and there discharge creditably all the duties pertaining to their experienced condition, as to suppose that a nation just freed from the restraints of despotism will, until taught by experience, evince a faculty of rational self-government. From these causes we may anticipate that a long night of wars and tumults with all their sad concomitants, is about to settle upon Europe—a night none the less dark from the certainty that it will end in a bright morning at last.

With such dark clouds obscuring the firmament of Europe, is it unreasonable to suppose that "the Star of Empire" will shortly take its course to the skies of some country or countries beyond the oceans which girt the Old World ? If so, some of the British Colonies must be the favored lands, for the United States of America have already proved a miserable failure. We are not going to repeat the oft and vainly uttered assertion that Britain too has passed its culminating point, and is now on the decline. Whether this is the fact, or not, need not change the drift of our remarks. It seems, at all events, clear that any important accessions of national strength and influence which Britain may hereafter receive must come through and by her Colonies. The time



must come before long when, like the aged father who sees himself outstripped by the youthful vigor of his children, yet lives a new and more eventful life in them, our Mother Country must be content to rely mainly upon the strength and found her brightest hopes upon the deeds of her Colonial offspring. She may be the centre of gravity around which they revolve ; but their's must be the substance—the momentum which shall move the world.

There is no part of those vast colonial possessions which seems, at the present time, so admirably calculated to form in itself a great and powerful empire—whether wholly independent, or one of a federation—as that section forming the North American Provinces. Whilst, with this object in view, the advantages which British America now possesses are unsurpassed, the obstacles which would naturally impede its success are fewer and more inconsiderable than would be met with by any other country on earth. We are not disposed to inculcate any fatalistic dogma of “ manifest destiny.” As a general rule the manifest destiny of nations, as of individuals, is what they themselves determine to make it. The British Americans should therefore be up and at work carving out their own national destiny and determined to make it a glorious one; and not wait to see what the chances of the times will do for them. Destiny has already brought them into a position to take the flood in the tide which leads on to fortune, and in their case, to national splendor, and to the command of at least the New World. They will be failing in their “ mission” both in what concerns themselves and the human race in general if they allow the golden opportunity to pass.

We have endeavored, as well as the small space which we could devote to the subject would permit, to show that the peculiar responsibilities of the British Americans, as at present situated, demand that they should strive to attain the position and the higher responsibilities of a respectable and



potent nationality. There is every reason to believe that the longings of the people themselves tend in that direction. Whether that tendency is sufficiently strong to lead to an early consummation of so desirable a result, is the only question. The desire, on the part of the British Americans, for national eminence is, of course, rather an ambitious feeling than the result of a conviction of great public duties to be performed. It is useless to enquire into the causes of such a feeling. It is enough for our present purpose to know that it exists, and that it is not undesirable that it should exist. The desire for national eminence is as deeply implanted in our nature and almost as nearly universal as the love of individual distinction. The more free and intelligent the people, the more widely is such a desire diffused among them and the stronger it burns. Everything in the circumstances of the British American people tends to stimulate such a feeling. They are not, like so many others, subject to the caprices of a despotic will, or ground down by tyrannical enactments, so as to feel that existence itself must be the first, the all-absorbing consideration. They have passed beyond the circle within which the bare necessities of national existence engage all the energies; and have now some spare capital of physical and intellectual vigor which they desire to expend in what we may call the *luxuries* of nationality—a world-wide name, an eminent rank, an extensive influence, and all the brilliant advantages attending them. It can have no cooling effect upon such aspirations to know that their realization must be attended with irksome burdens and harassing responsibilities, any more than the ambitions of an individual man could be checked by similar warnings. Yet the young man, and the aged one too, with all the experience of three-score years and ten, still strive upwards, although certain that every new step on the ladder will bring its additional burdens and anxieties. In the case both of the nation and the individual, it is right that it should be so.



Had it been otherwise, men would all still be living in wigwams, or burrowing in the earth, in primitive wretchedness, like the savages of some of the Californian plains.

The British Americans, considered as a distinct people, are an offshoot from a nation notoriously the most ambitious and the most successfully ambitious in the modern world. The view of the great achievements of the Mother Country is a constant incentive to British America to go and do likewise. It is not just to assert the unreasonableness of such a desire, and to urge that in all which relates to nationality the latter country should consider itself identical with the former. It would be scarcely less reasonable to insist that, so far as the execution of all ambitious projects is concerned, the individual man should merge his personal identity in the nation to which he belongs, and live *solely* for his country and without being known to do so. However closely the British Americans must and do consider themselves connected with the Mother Country, by natural affection, loyalty, political bonds, and similarity of interests, they nevertheless cannot but feel that they are a separate and distinct people. This feeling is intensified by the consciousness that, with however much kindness they may be treated by their fellow-subjects of Great Britain, they yet occupy a political rank almost immeasurably inferior to that of the latter.

Again the natural longings of British America for national consideration, are stimulated by the immediate presence of other young nations enjoying all the distinction and marks of respect which independence gives; but in all other respects so similarly circumstanced that the Provincialist feels constantly inclined to ask with dissatisfaction why there is this great difference between them. And what is done by Great Britain to satisfy these very natural and honorable "aspirations to be great"? Nothing whatever. We admit that she should not be expected to do much, except to refrain from throwing any obstacles in the way of the upward progress of British America. As we



have already observed, the people of this country must themselves must work out their own national destiny. That Great Britain will hinder their doing so after the plan we are now advocating, there seems no reason to suppose. But it is undeniable that Britain has always been in the habit of checking everything like a demonstration of distinct nationality on the part of her Colonies; and there is no reason to doubt that she will continue to manifest such a policy towards the Provinces while they continue thus disunited and comparatively powerless. This she may continue to do quietly, with the most provoking coolness, without making any deviation from the policy pursued for centuries, and therefore without seeming to inflict any flagrant injury upon, or quite outrage any feeling of, the colonists. Wars will be engaged in which may seriously injure this country; treaties with foreign countries will be entered into which may deeply affect our interests; but we must silently abide by the consequences. British America will continue to see the most inconsiderable of foreign nations treated with every mark of deference, whilst it is regarded as a political nonentity.

We can think of nothing with which to compare the anomalous political position of the British Americans except the social condition of the few aboriginal Indians who still stroll about our forests and shores. These Indians have perfect liberty to come and go as they please, without their legal right to go anywhere off the public highway being acknowledged; to abide by their own customs, provided they do not infringe any general law of the land. We acknowledge them as fellow-countrymen and fellow-subjects, and in cases of emergency they may claim and receive the protection of our laws; yet we deny them the right of suffrage under our Constitution; we possess ourselves of property without considering any claim which they may have therein; and we frame general legislative enactments without any regard whatever to



their interests. We are compelled by the evidence of our senses to acknowledge their existence; yet in every act, public or private, of which they are not the direct object, we quite ignore their existence. In a remarkably similar manner are the more privileged fellow-countrymen of these Indians treated by their fellow-subjects on the other side of the Atlantic.. We may enjoy our own possessions, plod on within our own borders, get as rich as we can, manage our own exclusively internal affairs, provided that in so doing we do not in anything run counter to the wishes of our brethren at "home"; yet the latter, when not directly treating with us, act in all things as if we had no existence at all. British America seeks companionship with the parent State; Great Britain, not even recognizing the manifestations of such a feeling, yet graciously bows "the very humble servant" of the least respectable of foreign nations. A notable instance of this was witnessed during the last war. In no part of Great Britain itself was there a more general and fervid zeal manifested for the national cause than in British America. This country had a disposition to do anything and everything which its limited ability would admit of to aid the Mother Country in that struggle. Offers were repeatedly made to raise colonial troops for the British army—offers which, if favorably received, would have been followed up with vigor and attended by a success which could have brought no discredit upon the British arms, and would have been a source of pride and satisfaction to the Colonies. The British Government coldly—and, may we not add, contemptuously?—declined the proffered services, but ran into a whole series of broils by endeavoring to enlist the mercenary vagabonds of hostile, foreign states. Judging from present appearances, the time is probably not remote when Great Britain will not feel herself in a position to reject any such offer, although humble; and will have a satisfaction in finding that these Provinces, from having become united and consequently strengthened, are in a position to render her substantial assistance.



It would be useless to ask that the British American should be placed upon the same footing, politically speaking, as the native of the United Kingdom. It would be scarcely possible to grant such a request. The one must always have a direct influence upon the Imperial Government; the other, only an indirect one. The latter must continue to occupy, in many respects, a more distinguished position than the former. But there is no good reason why the British American should continue in a position so immeasurably inferior to that of his more favored fellow-subjects. A Union of the Provinces would immediately lessen the distance between him and them; and we may reasonably hope, ultimately annihilate it altogether. It would elevate British America to a national standing; give it moral weight in the councils of the Mother Country and change the machinery which now connects them; and raise the British American people in their own estimation and in the estimation of the world.

It will be said that a Legislative Union of the Provinces will place them in a position of virtual independence with respect to the parent State as well as to other nations. Grant that it will do so. It may then be urged as an objection to such a course, that it is altogether a novel one. The position which these Provinces now occupy is, politically speaking, quite a novel one. Men, whether individually, or in communities, are ever seeking precedents for any step they may contemplate taking. The precedent—that of the United States—which most readily presents itself to a British American's mind in thinking of this Union, leads him to contemplate a *Federal* Union, one of the worst political organizations that the art of man ever contrived. The uninventive inclination to follow slavishly the most familiar examples, causes the still existing fragment of a Canadian faction to hug the absurd and degrading idea of attaining a nationality by rebellion and annexation to the United States. We have no intention of contending that precedent should be wholly disregarded in making political



changes ; but it must be remembered that to contend for the necessity of an example to follow in every case is to put a stop to all human progress.

It is needless for these Provinces, in contemplating any steps towards independent nationality, to seek for a precedent which will just suit their case. They can find none. The old Roman Colonies—Britain, for instance—were cast off and thrown upon their own resources, owing to the inability of the parent State to protect herself, or them, from foreign conquest. They, each in turn, submitted to foreign conquest and thus became so many distinct nations. The condition of the Netherlands when rebelling against the yoke of Spain, furnishes no parallel whatever to that of British America now. The case of the United States also, at the commencement of the revolutionary war, was quite dissimilar to that of British America, at the present time. They had always enjoyed a degree of national independence hitherto unknown to these Provinces ; and at last a rupture with the Mother Country upon a matter of vital moment led, by an open rebellion, to their entire separation from her. The people of Mexico and of the great Spanish Colonies of South America, took up arms against the short-lived Bonaparte dynasty of Spain. Circumstances growing out of this first outbreak led them to transfer their hostility from the monarch to the kingdom which he ruled, and resulted finally in their independence. The case of Brazil just previous to its attaining independence, furnishes many points of resemblance to that of British America at the present time ; yet it too is different. Brazil, at the time of its separation from Portugal, had far outgrown the proportions of a Colonial dependency. Yet the relations between the two continued to be of the most friendly nature. Their final and complete separation was effected without bloodshed and, we might say, amicably ; yet it was brought about by a singular train of accidents such as may never occur again.

The people of British America entertain feelings of the



most devoted loyalty towards their Sovereign and attachment towards Great Britain. They have no cause of complaint against the parent State which would warrant any violent measures for effecting a separation, even if they had the power of using such with effect; nor do they desire such a separation. All they wish—all that their circumstances require, is for them to be elevated in the political scale to a national rank. This can be done, without making any wider separation between the Provinces and Great Britain than already exists, and without any political convulsions, by bringing about a Legislative Union of the former and by some modifications of the absurd machinery of the Colonial Office. The means proposed for attaining this end are novel; the precise object thus to be attained has had no parallel in the history of nations; but the means and the object are not more new than the circumstances which suggest the one and demand the other.

Certainly it is no less the interest of Great Britain than of British North America, that the latter should become influential and powerful whilst still maintaining the closest connection with her. There is no independent State, however powerful, that, in the national tumults in which it has at times been involved, has not felt itself constrained to employ means and submit to indignities at the contemplation of which an individual man might blush, in order to strengthen its position by forming alliances with other States. Yet the precarious nature of such alliances, the rottenness of their foundation, and their costliness to those who seek them, have become proverbial among statesmen and historians. No nation of modern times has expended more and profited less by such alliances, than Great Britain. Admit that there has been and will still be for a time reasonable pretext for pursuing such a policy, is there any reason why Britain should forever go on entreating, plotting, subsidizing, outraging her own principles, to secure allies only, in nine cases out of ten, to be cheated, or betrayed,



by them at last? The British Empire including colonies of immense extent in every quarter of the world, comprises an aggregate area of over four millions of square miles, and contains more than 200 millions of inhabitants. These Colonies have never yet taken any conspicuous part in the great national contests in which the Mother Country has so long and with scarcely any intermission been involved. It is even argued that they are a source of weakness to Great Britain. There is certainly little prospect of any reliance being placed in them for much actual assistance so long as they continue in the humble condition of mere dependencies. But should it not be the policy of Great Britain to seek to develop the strength of her great colonial empires, to foster a national feeling in each of them, and to raise them, as opportunities occur to favor such a course, from the condition of dependencies to a rank more nearly approaching that of allies; yet of allies more closely connected to her by blood and interest than any foreign States can ever be? Were such a policy to be commenced even now, the time could not be remote when, closely leagued with those vast Colonial nations of North America, India, Australia, and The Cape—each in itself an empire—Great Britain might regard with indifference any combination of foreign powers, and indeed set the world at defiance. So far as this country is concerned, such a policy would at once be organized by bringing about, or by sanctioning, a Legislative Union of the North American Provinces.

Still keeping out of view those requirements of the present and those local wants, which naturally urge the North American Colonies towards a Union, is not a contemplation of the future which that Union would make sufficient in itself to convert any British American to an ardent advocacy of the measure? By the mere act of a Legislative Union of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, a nation would be founded, and one comprising a territory nearly equal to that of Great Britain, France, and Italy com-



bined ; and quite capable of sustaining as dense a population. But there is no reason why the Union policy should be stayed here. Newfoundland is now, for all practical purposes, nearer to Canada than Ireland was to England in 1800 ; and might also come into the new arrangement. Whether so or not, the whole continental portion of British America would, of course, come under the central Government organized by the Union. Of that vast territory over which the Hudson Bay Company now exercises a dominion which it must soon renounce, the world at large is only beginning to learn the value. Between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains there lies a tract more extensive than the whole of the organized Provinces to the eastward of it, and possessing agricultural resources superior to theirs. It is watered by many magnificent rivers, the principal of which, the Saskatchewan, ranks upon the North American continent next in length and volume to the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence. It is 1600 miles in length, through 1400 of which it is navigable, and affords the easiest water transit from the Atlantic ocean to the base of the Rocky Mountains. Along the valley of the Saskatchewan is also found the most direct and easiest, if not the only practicable, railway route quite across the North American continent. In this section of British America alone might be poured the whole surplus population of Europe for the next century. This territory, along with that of the now organized Provinces, would, in proportion to its area equal to that of Prussia, or a little more than half that of England, of which it is certainly capable, sustain a population of one hundred and thirty-six millions. Westward of the Rocky Mountains again, we have another immense territory greater in extent than that watered by the Saskatchewan and its tributaries and, according to all accounts, quite equal to it in resources. In the rear of all these and stretching to the Arctic Ocean, lies a still greater expanse of country usually described as a sterile and inhospitable wilderness,



and tenanted only by the hardy, adventurous hunter and the Esquimaux. Yet this immense tract abounds in valuable resources, although they differ from those of the rich agricultural territories which bound it on the south. The rivers which course through it, and Hudson Bay which it almost surrounds, contain wealth for the fisherman to an extent scarcely equalled by any other part of the world. The lands in that cold region have, of course, been but imperfectly explored as yet; but the reports brought back by the scientific men who have visited it, lead to the belief that it abounds in mineral wealth of almost every description, rendering it questionable if it is much inferior in value to any portion of this continent.

To bring these immense territories under one vigorous, local Government; to extend over them an active population, animated by a spirit of nationality, eager to elevate their country in the commonwealth of nations, and possessing all the means as well as the will to do so,—these would be the results of a Union of the Colonies. To adopt such a measure, would be to found an Empire, and an Empire which, with its vast territory, its almost unlimited resources for the development of internal strength, and its unrivalled advantages of geographical position, might soon sway the destinies of the New World, and become, at the same time, the right arm of that power which even now is the greatest upon earth. A Legislative Union of the North American Colonies is a simple measure, easy of consummation; but the magnitude, the grandeur of the results which would spring from it, are incalculable.







LETTER\*

TO

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE,

UPON A

UNION OF THE COLONIES

OF

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

1860.

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To His Grace the Duke of Newcastle,

Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies,  
&c. &c. &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE :

The undersigned—author of a pamphlet entitled “ Observations upon a Union of the Colonies of British North America,” published in 1855—at the suggestion of several public men, in Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia,

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\* This letter was placed in the hands of the Duke of Newcastle on the day of his landing upon this continent in the suite of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, in the summer of 1860, and was acknowledged by His Grace in flattering terms of approval.



who share in his opinions; who are, as they believe, intimately acquainted with the popular feeling upon political subjects throughout those Provinces; and who think that the visit of Your Grace to British North America affords an opportunity, which it would be wrong to neglect, of addressing Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies upon that subject—begs leave to submit to the consideration of Your Grace the following observations relative to a scheme for the Union of the British North American Provinces under a single Government and a single Parliament.

The scheme is one which doubtless has not now for the first time been brought to the notice of Your Grace. It is believed that nearly every man of eminent abilities, who has within the last half century given especial attention to the political *status* and prospects of British North America, has been favorable to that Union, and has looked forward hopefully to its accomplishment, as the foundation upon which the grandeur of the British dominions would be perpetuated on this continent. When His Royal Highness, the late Duke of Kent, was a resident of these Colonies, one of the many modes by which he testified his earnest desire for their prosperity, and his ready appreciation of what would best conduce to that end, was the hearty approval he gave to a scheme for their Union which was submitted to his consideration; and it would be most gratifying to those who have this project so much at heart, and would, if possible, increase the attachment of the British American people to the Royal Family of Great Britain, if the visit of the Son and Heir of our Queen, whom we now welcome to our shores, and whom Your Grace accompanies, should be associated with the first steps of a movement which would be really successful in consolidating the now comparatively weak and disconnected North American Provinces into a compact Viceroyalty, forming the nucleus of, it may be hoped, a powerful British American Empire.



It may be within the recollection of Your Grace that a Union of *all* the Provinces was recommended to the Imperial Government by the late Earl of Durham, when Governor-General. Subsequently, and at comparatively recent periods, resolutions in favor of the Union were laid before the Legislatures of Canada and Nova Scotia, and discussed at some length. Although in neither instance were these resolutions put to vote, many of the prominent men of the bodies referred to expressed themselves warmly in favor of the proposed change, whilst no active opposition towards it was evinced from any quarter.

In the summer of 1857, the Executive Government of Nova Scotia despatched to England a delegation, consisting of the Hon. James W. Johnston and Adams G. Archibald, Esquire, to confer with the Imperial Government, among other things, upon a Union of these Provinces. This subject was freely discussed by them with Mr. Labouchere, then Secretary of State for the Colonies. Mr. Labouchere was understood by the delegates to intimate that Her Majesty's Government felt disposed to leave the question entirely in the hands of the Colonists themselves; and that it would oppose no obstacle to the accomplishment of the Union. No plan, however, was proposed for carrying out that object, nor did anything transpire which evinced a readiness of the Imperial Government to take active steps towards its accomplishment.

In the following year, the Governor-General, Sir Edmund Head, in his speech to the Canadian Parliament, at the close of the session of that year, signified the desirability of effecting a Union with the other Provinces. The Executive Government of Canada, a short time afterwards, resolved upon asking the Colonial Secretary to authorise a meeting of delegates from each of the Colonies to consider that subject. The observations of Sir E. B. Lytton upon the speech of the Governor-General, and his reply to the three Canadian delegates to England,—Hon. Messrs. George E. Cartier, John



Ross, and A. T. Galt, who, on the 25th October, 1858, specially addressed him, in accordance with the resolution of the Canadian Government, were adverse to the holding of any such meeting of delegates. Sir E. B. Lytton was pleased to describe the question of Union as "necessarily one of Imperial character;" but declined to authorize the meeting of delegates to discuss that question, because, with the exception of one,—Nova Scotia, it is presumed,—the Imperial Government had received no expression of the sentiments of the Lower Provinces upon the subject.

This, we believe, is the position in which the question has been left, so far as the action of the Imperial, or Colonial, Governments is to be considered. The inferences to be actually drawn from the expressions of Mr. Labouchere and Sir E. B. Lytton, relative to this matter, are, that until the Colonies *all insist* upon the Union, Her Majesty's Government will not feel disposed to take any action in the matter; but that then it will be actively dealt with as one "of Imperial character." The writer of this communication believes, and it is the opinion of all whom he has heard express an opinion on the subject, that it would be wise and not unjust for the Imperial Government not only to take a part, but to take a leading part, in the earlier actual steps for the consummation of the Colonial Union. Some of the reasons for entertaining this opinion will be given hereafter. In the meantime we shall endeavor, very briefly, to furnish Your Grace with a few of the reasons why this Union of the North American Colonies is thought desirable, and why it has taken so firm a hold upon the minds of the British North American people.

The British North American people, like those of the Mother Country, are an enterprising and ambitious race. Collectively, and as a general rule, individually, they are ambitious. From this arises a craving for nationality, and a feverish dissatisfaction with the existing state of things, which are not easily defined, but which are very widely spread.



The British American people, although they are strongly attached to the Sovereign who rules over them, and to the land of their forefathers, have a liberal Constitution, have free institutions, and are exempt from many of the burdens which weigh upon most of other enlightened communities, nevertheless are not content with their political position. The reason is, that position is an anomalous one, and furnishes a constant restraint upon their aspirations. British America, as such, has no political *status* in the view of nations. In looking abroad, her inhabitants see countries and peoples comparatively insignificant in extent and numbers, and inferior to British America in everything except a distinct nationality, occupying a respected place in the commonwealth of nations. The inhabitants of such countries are treated with a consideration to which the British Americans, wherever they go, are strangers. It is because the former have a known, well-defined, national position; whilst the latter have not. The unpleasant feelings thus caused are more keenly experienced from the fact of these Colonies bordering upon the United States. We there find a people belonging to the same race, and speaking the same language as ourselves, who form one of the first class nations of the world. The citizens of that great Republic have not failed, whenever opportunity has occurred, to flaunt their brightest honors before our eyes, and to remind us of the inferior political standing which we as a particular people, occupy in comparison with themselves. Their motives in doing so may not be difficult to divine; but there is sufficient foundation for such comparisons to make them especially odious to the Colonists. The people of the Colonies feel that such a state of things need not continue. It is true that it is inseparable from the present disconnected condition of the Colonies; but when it is taken into consideration that these Colonies, taken collectively, now number a population of nearly four millions,—that they boast of a mercantile marine inferior only to those of Great Britain and



the United States,—that their territory is greater than any other upon this continent except Brazil, and is quite as rich as that Empire in the resources requisite for sustaining population,—it is but reasonable that they should feel dissatisfied with conditions in consequence of which, notwithstanding all this, they still remain in a state of political nonentity relative to the outside world. For were these Colonies united so as to become one consolidated Viceroyalty, the bare fact of that Union taking place would immediately give British North America a high *status* among nations. She would be looked upon and respected as a *quasi* independent power of a high order; whilst her connection with the Mother Country would not, in any degree, be weakened.

The repressive effect of the present condition of the Colonies upon all ambitious *individual* effort, within their limits, is perhaps still more widely and keenly felt. Owing to the very limited sphere which each separate Colony affords for such effort, the prospect of achieving honors and distinctions in any of what are called the *professions*, is disheartening in the extreme. Each Province has but few prizes, either in the shape of titles, or more substantial honors, to offer as the reward of successful talent, either to the professional politician, or to the man who follows any other avocation; and those few are so insignificant as to present but few attractions to men of superior intellect and lofty aspirations. We are proud to know that some British American Colonists have achieved distinction in the British Army and Navy; but it is to be feared that a long period must elapse before very many of our young men can employ themselves in that sphere, because it is too expensive for most Colonial fortunes, and because when a Colonist enters the British Army, or Navy, he may almost be said to expatriate himself for life. As for the other paths by which the men of Great Britain reach distinction and are rewarded with honors, they are practically closed against the Colonist.



Here again the contiguity of the Colonies to the United States suggests disagreeable comparisons. In that great Republic, the scope for individual exertion is immense; and although the rewards of success in the higher walks of life are not generally so great as under most monarchical Governments, some of the "prizes open to all," in that country, are of a very high order. Many a British North American has seen individuals upon the United States side of our boundary, whom he knew from personal acquaintance to be inferior to him in natural abilities, education, wealth, and social standing, raised in a short time to the Presidency of that Republic, a position which would entitle him to rank with the proudest monarchs of Europe. At the same time, that British American could not reasonably aspire even to become the Governor of his native Province; and if he were to go to England, all the influence which he could command would probably not procure him a presentation to his Sovereign.

It is presumed that no argument can be necessary to prove to Your Grace that a Union of these Colonies would create a sphere sufficiently large for the exertions of the most active and aspiring of their inhabitants, and necessarily provide rewards commensurate with their exertions. In doing that, it would satisfy a want which is believed to be now deeply felt. It would do more. The reasons presented above for a Union of the Provinces are for the most part, such as have suggested themselves only to the more thoughtful and educated members of the community. It is not pretended that all of the masses, and of the petty, local politicians, are influenced by such views. The present aspect of political affairs, however, within each of the Provinces, wherein the influence of the classes just named makes itself largely felt, furnishes strong additional reasons for the change which is now recommended to the notice of Your Grace. It is obvious that a large sphere of action has ever a strong tendency to enlarge and liberalize the views of



the actor; whilst a small sphere, comprising only unimportant interests, tends to the very opposite result. This is most especially the case in politics. It need scarcely be observed, as it is so notorious, that even in independent countries having representative institutions as we have, the views of public men, as a general rule, become narrowed, and faction more rampant, in proportion as we find the arena on which they operate more circumscribed. This rule applies with still greater force to the North American Colonies. The people of an independent country, however narrow its limits, have still national questions to discuss, and national interests to preserve, or to contend with. These Colonies have not. Each of them has all the machinery of Government requisite for managing the affairs of an empire; yet, in the case at least of the smaller Colonies, the operation of this machinery is confined to objects and interests of not *very much* greater magnitude than those which come under the control of some English parishes. Under such circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that factionism and extremely violent faction disputes, should prevail, to the prejudice of the more important public interests. Such is found to be the fact; and it will be found that dissensions between what are called "political parties," upon questions entirely unimportant, or of so disagreeably mean a character that it is offensive to honorable and enlightened men to discuss them at all, are here frequent, violent, and protracted, just in inverse proportion to the population and extent of the Colony under consideration. In this respect, there is only too much reason to fear that these British North American Colonies are gradually becoming more immoral, politically, and worse. It is presumed that Your Grace must already, as a statesman of the Empire, and from occupying the position of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, have verified by personal knowledge the truth of the deplorable facts referred to within the last few sentences.



There is something in the politics of these Colonies which tends to constantly belittle the views and aspirations of the less intelligent and reflective portion of their inhabitants. Yet there is no ground to doubt that they are loyal and true, and mean well. But they have been entrusted with a constitutional machinery which, elsewhere and until within a recent period, they have seen solemnly applied only to great interests and essentially national questions; whilst they have to adapt it solely to petty, local interests. They estimate the magnitude of the subjects of their factious disputes by their preconceived conceptions of the magnitude of the machinery placed in their hands for settling them. Thus too many of our Colonial politicians make "much ado about nothing," or what is the next thing to nothing; whilst, as a very natural consequence of this, really important matters are lost sight of.

The proposition submitted to the consideration of Your Grace is, that if even the class of these Colonists whom we are now considering had much more important political objects thrust upon them, such as a *quasi* nationality would necessarily impose, legislation and the administration of public affairs throughout British America would become a more serious business, and would be conducted with vastly greater calmness, wisdom, and circumspection. That is an end which it seems possible to attain within a reasonable period of time, only by a Union of all the Colonies. The condition of every one of these Colonies, so far as their internal politics is to be considered, is deplorable, at the present time, and is daily growing worse. We are fast approaching the time when *all* of the talented and enlightened members of the community will abstain from taking any prominent part in our Colonial politics; and when the management of public affairs will wholly fall into the hands of violent factions, led by ignorant and narrow-minded, but cunning men. There is every reason to believe that a Union and consolidation of



the Colonies would, by largely adding to the importance of the subjects of British American legislation and government, and necessarily elevating the position of the British American politician, check this downward tendency and gradually cure the evils just complained of. It seems difficult to conceive any other scheme which would effect that cure.

There are other considerations favorable to the plan proposed with which few persons in British North America, of whatever class, have failed to be impressed. These are, for the most part, of a commercial character. The isolated position which each one of these Colonies occupies relative to the others, furnishes a constant check to their commercial intercourse, and indeed to their commercial enterprise generally. It may be safely alleged as incontrovertible, that this restraint can never be removed—the obstructions to trade which it causes can never be wholly surmounted, except by a complete and absolute consolidation of the Colonies under one Government, having unlimited internal jurisdiction. Considering the near vicinity to each other of the Provinces of Eastern British America, the small amount of their intercolonial trade seems, at the first glance, almost incredible. The causes are, however, easily discerned. One is the geographical obstacles which Nature has placed in the way of a more free intercourse. During winter, or for about six months of the year, Canada, Prince Edward Island, and Eastern New Brunswick, have virtually no communication with the remainder of the Maritime Provinces. Canada is, during that period, cut off from all communication with the sea, except through a foreign country which may, at any moment, be an enemy. The effect of these natural conditions in constantly impeding intercolonial trade is obvious; for where a trade cannot be kept up regularly, it is not reliable, and will not flourish at all,—where it must be suspended for one half the year, it will exhibit no very great degree of vigor during the remaining half. The cure for this difficulty



is equally obvious. It is the completion of the line of railway from Halifax to Quebec. This work, to which reference will again presently be made, would be one inevitable and immediate result of a political Union of the Provinces, even although left entirely to their own resources for its accomplishment.

A much more serious obstacle in the way of intercolonial trade is found in the fact that *it is* intercolonial—that the Colonies are several instead of being only one. The Provinces having each a legislature of its own, without any superior revising power to ensure uniformity among them in matters where uniformity of legislation is essential to their common interests, there are as many constantly changing tariffs, varieties of currency, and local codes of commercial and other laws, as there are Provinces. It need scarcely be said that these are great impediments to trade between the different sections of British America; and, as a natural consequence of that, the foreign trade of the country, as a whole, is not so vigorous as it would be if commercial intercourse between its various parts was entirely untrammelled. It is difficult to remove these restrictions so long as the Provinces remain separate and mutually independent. Yet, owing mainly to the various hindrances to intercolonial trade already mentioned, that trade is comparatively so inconsiderable that each of these Provinces actually effects very much larger exchanges with the United States than it does with all the other Provinces combined. There may not appear anything very monstrous, or ruinous, in this; but it is certainly not the favorable picture of its commerce which British North America ought to be able to show. It would unquestionably be very much improved upon, were all barriers to commercial intercourse between its various parts removed; and a very large portion—perhaps the largest portion—of the profits of Colonial trade which now find their way into the pockets of United States dealers, might, without resorting to any fac-



titious means to divert them therefrom, he retained by the British Americans themselves: for it happens that these Colonies are so circumstanced, with regard to geographical position and resources, as to be each, in a great measure, the complement of the others.

A few illustrations may be mentioned. Upper Canada and the Far West, where the Red River Settlement already forms the nucleus of what will no doubt be, one day, a dense population, seem calculated to be *par excellence* the granary of British America; whilst it seems probable that the Maritime Provinces will always be in a position to receive a large share of the surplus breadstuffs of the West. Canada will be a great timber producing country at a time when Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and perhaps New Brunswick, will be importers of that article; whilst the immense fertile plains of the Saskatchewan country, being nearly devoid of timber, will, when colonized, always afford a market for that product. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but particularly the former, abound in coal, a substance which is not to be found in Canada at all. The Maritime Provinces and Lower Canada also contain immense deposits of iron,—unsurpassed by any in the world,—copper, and other mineral substances which are generally found wanting in the country farther west. Again, the great staple export of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland is fish, the greater portion of which is sent to the West Indies and South America. With free commercial intercourse and easy communication throughout British North America, these two Provinces would, much to the advantage of the whole country, become the factors for supplying Canada and the interior country beyond it with West India produce, and Nova Scotia especially would become a British North American emporium for such produce.

The comparative magnitude of the trade of these Colonies with the United States, at the present time, is owing, in a great measure, to the operation of what is called, somewhat



nconsistently, "the Reciprocity Treaty." It is not necessary here to give the history of that treaty, or to describe its operation in detail. It has largely increased the activity of trade in the Colonies, and has doubtless been productive of benefit to them; but, in many sections of the Colonies, the opinion prevails that this advantage has still been dearly purchased, whilst the mode in which the treaty was effected is considered objectionable. Since it has been in operation, the principles embodied in it have been more thoroughly and widely canvassed than they ever were before. The treaty itself expires in 1866, when, no doubt, an effort will be made to renew it. If it is renewed, in any form, without the consent of the different Provinces, great discontent will ensue. If sought to be renewed with their consent, they remaining separate as at present, the question will be beset with difficulties. Nearly every Province, and some sections of Provinces, will desire important modifications of the existing treaty in its favor, and each will naturally look *solely* to its own sectional interests. This being the case, and the contracting parties being far removed from, and, in a measure, independent of each other, it is to be feared that much difficulty, delay, and perhaps total failure in settling the matter satisfactorily, will be the result. Did the ratification of the treaty, however, depend upon the action of a single parliament—that of the *United Provinces*—although sectional interests might clash, the whole body would yet feel *then* that they had interests in common superior to those of a local character; and the representatives of conflicting claims, being brought face to face, a spirit of mutual accommodation would be evolved which would, in all probability, lead to an early and generally satisfactory settlement. The same rules which would apply in this case, would apply in any other where the now unconnected Colonies were called upon to settle any question where several, or all, of them were interested.

If we regard this question only as one in which the inter-



ests of the British Empire, as a whole, are to be considered, it is submitted to Your Grace whether the arguments adducible in favor of the proposed Union are not amply sufficient to make it a matter of great importance that it should be effected at the earliest possible moment. It is well to remember that these Colonies are not in the safest of neighborhoods. Twice has the adjoining republic made an attempt to seize upon them. More than once within the memory of many persons still living, it seemed not very improbable that their fate would be an amalgamation with the United States. At the present time, we can see nothing in the aspect of British American affairs which seems to indicate such a result. Still, as the Colonies are dissatisfied with their present insignificant rank, it is uncertain what the future may bring forth; and this appears more uncertain when we recollect that some of the greatest and most startling political changes which have taken place in the world, of late years, particularly in some other parts of the British Empire, have been wholly unexpected. But, although the Colonies, as a whole, seem not likely ever to amalgamate with the United States, that republic may make serious encroachments upon their territory and do much damage to their interests, in the event of hostilities breaking out between it and Great Britain, whilst these Colonies remain still disunited. A like result might be anticipated in the event of Britain being at war with any other great power which could muster a considerable force in North America; for the disconnected condition of the Colonies renders them incapable of doing very much in their own defence. It will not probably be contradicted that any such injury to them would be an injury to the Mother Country.

Many indications have been observable, of late years, of a disposition on the part of the Imperial Government to throw the North American Colonies, in a great measure, upon their own resources, for their own defence against foreign aggression. The principle of insisting upon their bearing a large



portion, or even the whole, of the burden of their own defences, is one to which no one could reasonably object, provided that those Colonies were first placed in a position which would enable them to act with vigor and unanimity; otherwise it would impose upon them great hardship, if not injustice. Were they now to be thus thrown upon their own resources, they would be exposed to great dangers. Each Province would naturally measure only its own resources against those of the real or suspected enemy; and the calculation would have a disheartening effect, which would prevent that Province putting forth efforts even to the extent of its own ability. Such force as they could raise collectively would be of comparatively little service; for they would be under no single direction, and in all that related to the raising, equipment, and management of such a force, the various Colonies would, sometimes unintentionally, at other times through local jealousy, or sectional selfishness, be almost incessantly thwarting each other, just as they are now doing, every year, in their legislation upon matters in which they have a common interest. Were the Colonies consolidated under a single Government, they would, there is no reason to doubt, cheerfully accept, as a natural consequence of their being united, the obligation of protecting themselves. They would feel too, in that case, their own real strength, and would not, under any circumstances, shrink despairingly from the duties thus imposed on them. As a single Commonwealth, they would very soon be in a position to assume the whole charge of their own defence, or to contribute to the defences of the whole Empire to an extent equivalent to that. Great Britain would thus be relieved of a great burden, and British North America would be to her a right arm of strength, instead of, as at present, a cause of weakness.

One inevitable result of the proposed Union would be the immediate connection of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada by railroad. The completion of a work which would



enable the British Government to transport troops and munitions of war from Halifax to the St. Clair River in three days' time, or which would enable them to be conveyed, when the lakes are free from ice, to the very heart of the continent, in one week, would be of incalculable advantage to the British nation in the event of a war with the United States. Its construction, and the Union of these Provinces into one compact whole, would go far towards preventing such a war ever taking place.

But our expectations need not be limited to the Halifax and Quebec Railway as the only work of great national importance which would result from this Union. There can be no doubt that the great *impetus* given to British American national enterprise by the act of Union would speedily lead to the completion of a continuous railway line from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Many circumstances point to such a result. The only practicable railway route across the continent is said, and generally believed, to lie wholly within British territory; and in these days of rapid movement, the public which travels and trades between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of America, will never be content with any slower means of transit than a railway. Like the political Union of the Colonies itself, such a work appears necessary to prevent the great interior country drained by the Saskatchewan and the Red River, and which is not inferior in agricultural capabilities to any other part of the continent, from becoming gradually "Americanized," and ultimately annexed to the United States—an end to which it now seems tending. This railway would be indispensable to British America itself, were the Colonies of the Pacific coast comprised in the projected Union; and it is believed that all the advocates of that measure hope that they will be comprised in it eventually, if not at the outset. But exclusive of all merely British American wishes and necessities which may be anticipated relative to this Atlantic and Pacific Railway, Great Britain



herself has an immense interest in its construction. When it is recollected that the necessity for Great Britain's strengthening her position on the Pacific, and facilitating her communications therewith, is becoming every day more urgent; that with this railway in operation, Vancouver Island could be reached from England in two weeks' time, whilst that transit could not be made in less than two months by any other route that did not lie across some portion of foreign territory, and not in much less than that by any other route whatever; and that this railway line is on the direct and by far the shortest practicable route from England to China, Japan, and the East Indian Archipelago, where British interests are enormously upon the increase—the paramount importance to Great Britain of securing her position in British North America, and procuring the early construction of this great highway, which would insure to her the command of both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, is too obvious to demand argument, or illustration, in proof.

It appears only reasonable to suppose that an additional inducement to the Imperial Government to favor the consolidation of the North American Colonies under a single Provincial Government, would be found in the fact that the machinery by which the Mother Country rules over and maintains her relations with the Colonies, would be so very much simplified. The toil, care, and expense of managing the supreme government of, and exercising general supervision over, seven or eight Colonies, each of them legislating for itself independently of the others, must of necessity be much greater than in the case of one Colony, comprising the same territory and population as the seven or eight. The improved relations which, according to this view, would be created between the Government of Great Britain and that of her North American dependencies by the union of the latter with each other, would also extend to the commercial relations between the two. If instead of having as many



tariffs and sets of local commercial regulations as there are Colonies, the whole of British North America had but one, and if unrestricted commercial intercourse might be had between all sections of that country, many perplexities which now encumber its commercial intercourse with the United Kingdom, as well as with foreign parts, would be removed, and a more spirited and reliable trade between the two would ensue.

Why, it may be asked, attempt to thrust upon the notice of a member of the Imperial Government arguments in favor of this Union, when Her Majesty's Government have already evinced a disposition to leave the settlement of the question entirely in the hands of the Colonists themselves? Your Grace will observe that many of the very facts which show the necessity for a Union, are likely to hinder its accomplishment by the Colonists' own unaided efforts, and indicate the desirability of the Mother Country taking a lead in the measure. The narrowing tendency of the present political contests of the Colonies upon the minds of their politicians, has already been alluded to. Your Grace need scarcely be reminded that a large proportion of the class of local and ephemeral politicians everywhere always favor disunion and disintegration; because in a large sphere their occupation would be gone, and they would be obliged to make way for more enlightened and abler men. It is not improbable that many of this class in British America would oppose the Union, did its accomplishment appear imminent. As also mentioned above, legislation, throughout the Colonies generally has unfortunately assumed, of late years, a very partizan character. So far is this the case, that in more than one of the Provinces it is extremely difficult to get any measure, however important to the interests of the public as a whole, passed through the Legislature, unless it can be made to appear that the measure in question will ensure special substantial benefits to the faction which then happens to be in the ascend-



ency, or tend to weaken their rivals for political power. The projected Union of the Colonies would not lead to the aggrandizement of any one now organized political party, in any Colony of North America, at the expense of any other party. Hence a reason why a considerable number of the public men of the Colonies might exhibit an indifference, or possibly a hostility, towards the proposed measure. These anticipated objections are, it may as well be confessed, entirely conjectural. The writer does not *know* that any objections would be made, from any Colonial quarter, to this step. He has never once, either in public or private, heard any objection urged to a Union of the Colonies, although the subject has been pretty widely canvassed of late years; whilst he is aware that many of the most prominent statesmen of British North America are its open advocates. Nevertheless, owing to the temper of too large a number of the Colonial politicians, and the character which their discussions too often assume, and to the propensity of petty, local demagogues everywhere to oppose all such changes as this, it is considered not improbable that the Union could not be effected without clamors against it being raised from some quarter: that is, if the accomplishment of the object were left wholly to the action of the Colonies themselves. On the contrary, were the Mother Country to take the lead in the matter, and invite the co-operation of the various Colonies to effect the change in question, that co-operation would, it is believed, be heartily given. This is indeed mere matter of opinion; but the cheerful compliance with which the Colonies have usually responded to the direct suggestions and invitations of the Imperial Government, leaves no room for doubt that they would readily acquiesce in a suggestion such as this to which no reasonable objection could be made.

There are other difficulties in the way of the Colonies coming together solely by their own act, which are not quite so problematical as those just mentioned. In all of the Colonies



party animosities and jealousies are excessive; and there is some reason to fear that if any party, in either of our Legislatures, were, as a party, to move vigorously in favor of the Union, the pure spirit of faction would cause a stout opposition to it from their party opponents. There is ground for suspicion that one great reason why more active and vigorous steps towards that end have not hitherto been taken by any of the many prominent public men who are known to be favorable to its attainment, is that they feared lest their moving in it would evoke the hostility of political rivals, thus causing delay to the success of the project, and possibly its ultimate failure. It is credible that a similar jealousy between the Provinces, as so many individuals, would produce a like result, were any one of them to attempt, in advance of the others, to push this scheme to a consummation. All such difficulties would be at once and easily obviated by the Imperial Government's taking the initiative, and inviting the several Provinces to act simultaneously in arranging the terms of the Union.

Besides the arguments embodied in the foregoing remarks, both in favor of the Union itself and in favor of the Mother Country taking an active part in its consummation, there are others which may be briefly alluded to. The universal affection entertained by her subjects for the person of our gracious Queen, would render this great political change in one section of her empire a matter of easy consummation *now*. Were her Government to take a leading part in bringing it about, such an act would be regarded by the British American people as one of maternal solicitude for their permanent welfare, and would draw them, if possible, more closely, and certainly attach them more securely to the British throne. Should the settlement of this question be still left to the chances of the future, it is difficult to say what may be the result; but evil, rather than good, may be reasonably anticipated. Should the—in that case difficult—operation of coming together be achieved by the Colonies themselves,



without aid from the Imperial Government, they would probably consider that they had nothing to thank the latter for, and would draw off, wearing towards the Mother Country an independent defiant air, which slight cause would change into a hostile one. Every hour adds to the pressing necessity for early action in this matter. The local evils, alluded to in the course of these remarks, incident to the political condition of the Lower Provinces, are yearly increasing; whilst in Canada *something must* be done forthwith. The danger of delay is to that Province imminent. If the Lower Provinces are not soon amalgamated with Canada, to neutralise the injurious action of the contending powers there, an open rupture between Upper and Lower Canada seems inevitable, and the eventual annexation of the western section of the Province, as well as the Red River country, to the United States, would be a highly probable result of that separation. At the same time that this opinion is hazarded, it is submitted to Your Grace, however paradoxical such an assertion may seem in this connection, that the degree of success attained by the experiment of the Canadian Union of 1840, proves conclusively the feasibility and ultimate success of a wider measure, which would comprise the whole of British North America. In Canada were found two races in open hostility towards each other, professing antagonistic religious creeds, and widely differing from each other in customs, laws, traditions, and national characteristics. Yet United Canada has, in a career of twenty years, made such a rapid progress in increase of population, wealth, general prosperity,—has attained, we may say, such a degree of grandeur, as would have been entirely impossible, had it continued, during that period, two distinct Provinces. The seemingly insurmountable difficulties in the way of a longer continuance in operation of its present Constitution, are not owing to the fact that Upper and Lower Canada are united, but result from certain artificial conditions annexed to the Union Act. It



seems difficult to conceive how these difficulties can now be got rid of without doing manifest injustice to either one or the other of the two great divisions of Canada, unless by combining them with the other North American Colonies under a single Colonial Government.

This is probably neither the time nor the occasion to enter upon any details as to the particular kind of Union that would be most desirable. The writer will only venture to observe, as an individual opinion, that a Federative Constitution similar to that lately accorded by Imperial Act to New Zealand, dividing the whole United Colonies into a number of Provinces, each with an elective Superintendent and Council to administer and legislate upon certain defined and exclusively local affairs,—the whole being subordinated to a Viceroy appointed by the Crown, or hereditary in a branch of the Royal Family, and a metropolitan Parliament of two houses, to deal with all matters of general interest, and to possess the power of exercising a general supervision over the local legislation of the Provinces, so as to harmonise their action, would seem to combine the greatest degree of security to local interests with the greatest unanimity upon all matters of importance affecting the whole United Colony. It would also probably satisfy the wishes and aspirations of the greatest number.

In conclusion, the undersigned craves permission to suggest to Your Grace the desirability of making enquiries, so far as leisure and convenience will permit, during the tour of Your Grace through these Colonies, into the state of feeling existing among them relative to the subject of the above remarks, and their expectations as to their future relations, political and commercial, with their powerful neighbors of the United States, with each other, but still more with the Mother Country. Should anything in the foregoing observations add to the disposition of Your Grace to listen favorably to this suggestion and act upon it, the object with which they were



penned will have been fully attained ; for the writer believes that your Grace will then hold communication upon this subject with many public men who are as profoundly impressed with a sense of the necessity for a Union of the Colonies as he himself *can* be, and who can much more forcibly and convincingly present the arguments which go to prove that necessity.

P. S. HAMILTON.

*Halifax, Nova Scotia, July 28th, 1860.*



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