

destiny may lead them. They are free to choose either course, as free as the British Parliament, and for this once the mother country will abide by their choice, but there are no more alternatives than these. They may construe Mr. Cartwright's despatches as they like, or draw what conclusions they please from debates in Parliament, but that, so far as we have any capacity to understand it, is the determination of the nation. Months ago one of the most intelligent of Canadians replied to some searching questions on the subject much in this fashion,—“We prefer Great Britain to the United States; if you will fight for us we are willing to fight, but it is not worth our while to fight as the South has done; we should not be extinguished by annexation, and the stake is not great enough.” If that express the heart of the colonists, and all this news looks like it, there is an end of the matter. They are free already.

We do not profess to know the inner mind of the Canadians either on the Confederation or the alliance with Great Britain, but this much seems to us certain,—it is absolutely necessary for this country to know that inner mind. The very first thing to be done before we can move another step is to ascertain precisely what the bulk of the colonists desire—if they themselves know—to assure them they are at full liberty to vote themselves independent without incurring charges of treason, and, if they reject that offer, to submit to them in some intelligible form the conditions of our alliance. If they accept them, well; if they modify them in any endurable way, well also; but if they reject them the rejection must be accepted as proof that they value their connection with Britain only for the pecuniary relief it affords, and the connection must end. Such a severance would be regarded by the majority of educated Englishmen with a feeling of bitter pain. It hurts their pride, breaks up their dream of an Empire ringed round with a fence of Anglo-Saxon alliances, impairs their confidence in the policy which of late years has induced them to do justice to the colonies often to their own hurt. But it is impossible in the present state of the world that all the advantages of alliance should be on one side, and the colonists, as they have demanded the advantages of independence, must also accept its burdens. England is willing, as the vote in the House of Commons showed, to be faithful to them, but the contract is one of marriage, and the weaker side cannot break it and demand maintenance too.

OF MAGNANIMITY.

“The magnanimous man,” said Aristotle, “is he who, being really worthy, estimates his own worth highly. If a man puts too high a value upon himself, he is vain. And if a man, being worthy, does not rate himself at his proper worth, why he is little better than a fool. But the magnanimous man will be only moderately gratified by the honours which the world heaps upon him, under the impression that he has simply got what is his due. He will behave with moderation under both bad fortune and good. He will know how to be exalted and how to be abased. He will neither be delighted with success, nor grieved by failure. He will neither shun danger, nor seek it; for there are few things which he cares for. He is reticent and somewhat slow of speech, but speaks his mind openly and boldly when occasion calls for it. He is not apt to admire, for nothing is great to him. He overlooks injuries. He is not given to talk about himself or about others; for he does not care that he himself should be praised or that other people should be blamed. He does not cry out about trifles, and craves help from none. The step of the magnanimous man is slow, his voice deep, and his language stately; for he who cares about few things has no need to hurry, and he who thinks highly of nothing needs not to be vehement about anything.” Such is the character of the magnanimous man, as drawn by an old heathen, writer more than 2,000 years ago. Doubtless this was a standard of perfection at which Aristotle himself aimed, and which many a Greek attained to—in outward seeming at least; though the Athenian magnanimity may have sadly degenerated when Paul of Tarsus preached on Mars Hill to a crowd of gossips and triflers four hundred years later. And certainly the portrait as drawn by Aristotle has something grand, we may also say noble, in its lineaments. Indeed, it would be noble but for the lazy scorn which flashes from the eye and curls the lip. Self-contained and self-reliant, the magnanimous man towers above his fellows, like an oak amongst reeds—his motto *nec frangas nec flectes*. And, if there be somewhat too much of self-sufficiency about him, we must remember that, to be great

and strong, a heathen must necessarily lean upon himself. The settler in foreign and sparsely inhabited countries needs and acquires a degree of self-reliance and self-assertion which would be offensive in the person of a member of civilized society. And the Greek became self-sufficient even in his ethics, as having no definite promise of help out of himself, or beyond his own resources. But it is curious to notice how in the main the ethics of 2,000 years ago repeat themselves in the fashionable ethics of to-day. Much of what Aristotle has said of the magnanimous man as to his carriage and bearing, might have been published only last year as a fashionable treatise by the Hon. Mr. A—— or Lady B—— on good breeding and the manners of a gentleman. After a word or two here and there—blot out the rather offensive self-sufficiency—lay a very thin wash of colour over the superciliousness of manner which is somewhat too manifest in Aristotle's magnanimous man, and you might be reading a description of “the swell,” as poor Jones calls the man who lives and moves and has his being in society. There is no doubt, in fact, that the laws of good breeding, the *leges inscripte* of society, do tend, more or less, to produce an appearance of what the old Greeks named magnanimity. These laws are simply the barriers which the common sense of most has erected, to protect people who are thrown much together from each other's impertinences. They are lines of defence, and therefore their tendency is to isolate the individual from the crowd; to make him self-contained, reticent, and independent of opinions; alike careless of censure and indifferent to applause. It may be said that much of this is only manner. But, as in poetry the matter often grows out of the manner, so the character is immensely influenced by the outward bearing; a man becomes to some extent what he wishes to appear.—*Macmillan's Magazine.*

OUR MARITIME STRENGTH.

(Spectator.)

No man ever quite attains his own ideal. That seems to be the root of the choros of criticism which always breaks out when the Naval Estimates are produced, and which almost convinces timid people that Great Britain, with all her expenditure on her marine, has not an efficient navy. The national ideal has for some years been a navy, chiefly of iron-clads, stronger than the navies of any two Powers, composed of invulnerable ships each able to destroy an opponent without injury to itself, each able to sail to the Pacific if necessary, each as swift as a despatch boat, and altogether costing about eight millions a year. Nobody, however, ever gets his ideal; this nation has not got it, and never will get it; and the real point for discussion is whether its efforts secure any reasonable or sufficiently reasonable approach towards its end. Lord Clarence Paget, as spokesman for the Government, says that so much at least has been obtained. The nation, he says, will by the end of this year possess a total of thirty iron-clads, all of the first-class in one way or another, though four are intended only for harbour defence, and four cannot be sent to great distances because they are so large that out of England they could not be docked. Docks, however, are to be built at Malta and Bermuda, by which that defect will be remedied. In addition to this line-of-battle fleet there will be seven armed vessels built entirely for speed, on a model improved from that of the *Albatross*, and intended entirely for the protection of commerce. This is the vessel which of all others private yards can best turn out, and it is needless therefore to overdo their construction. In addition to all this force there is a wooden steam fleet, hereafter to be found more useful than some critics believe, admitted to be so—“to any wooden fleet in existence. To man them we need 69,750 men, besides 17,000 enrolled in the reserve, and training schools which turn out some 2,000 most efficient seamen a year. This great force, immense when we consider that Secretary Welles in the fourth year of war registers only 17,000 American-born seamen, comprises a proportion of “expert” gunners which has doubled in two years, and is as a body so orderly that the demand for good-conduct pay rises every year till it becomes an appreciable weight upon the finances. All this we obtain at an expense stated in round numbers of ten millions a year, which again is in course of steady reduction from two causes. The “conversion” of the fleet is getting itself done, very slowly indeed, but still getting done, and as it gets done the number of men employed decreases. The iron-clads do not want so many men, but need more thoroughly qualified men, in fact; to use Lord Clarence Paget's strong illustration, “skilled labour is being substituted for brute force.” Finally, behind and beyond all this enormous provision of ships and docks, and men and material, rests the still greater provision now in private hands, a provision large enough to fit out a great war in a twelvemonth, and all available for money, though doubtless after a certain loss of time.

It seems a very satisfactory statement that, and the only ques-