

for the better. Armed with authority to penetrate into suspected dwellings, and to take into custody those who could not render a satisfactory account of themselves, the police were not long in eradicating the evil. The lower orders of the people abstained through fear from frequenting the haunts of vice, while those of a better class acknowledged the more powerful influence of shame; inasmuch that insensibly the licentiousness and disorder which had attained a most alarming growth under preceding administrations, was succeeded by a quiet and decorum as favorable to public and private morals as it was to public and private interests. True it is that these important objects were not effected without a strong manifestation of indignant clamor against Lord Durham; nor indeed without occasional collisions between the police and the townspeople, but these ebullitions finally gave way before the general good sense which admitted the importance of the improvements introduced.

The Police system, as originated in Canada by Lord Durham, is spreading itself gradually over the country. It still continues in Quebec, although on a much more limited scale than when His Lordship was there, and had at one time attained an almost equal efficiency in Montreal, where such a force is absolutely indispensable, and has been adopted with advantage both in Kingston and Toronto. In the course of time the Police of Canada will become a highly useful body.

But these improvements, essential even as they were to the prosperity of the country, were lesser considerations in the gigantic plan which had been formed by Lord Durham. It at once suggested itself to the comprehensive mind of the High Commissioner that whatever advantages might be designed for Canada, they must be valueless as long as the chasm which separated the British from the French Canadian population, as well in interest as in feeling, should remain open. How was this chasm to be filled up?

In devising the scheme of a Federal Union of the Provinces of British North America, Lord Durham not merely evinced the most thorough and statesmanlike knowledge of the difficulties with which he had to grapple, but the most ready and suitable resource in meeting and overcoming them. The great complaint of the British population in Lower Canada had been the numerical superiority of the leading French Canadians in the House of Assembly, by whom all measures of improvement were overthrown, and the advancement of the province consequently retarded. To remedy this state of things, and to give a preponderating power to British interests, without openly aiming at the subversion of that enjoyed, nay, almost wholly monopolized by the French-Canadian population, required all the skill of the diplomatist. Lord Durham at once saw that a Federal Union of the provinces was, independently of the higher objects embraced in the plan, the only measure likely to secure this, for, as Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island, would return subjects of British origin to the inferior Legislature, the French ascendancy would necessarily be swamped, and thus a vast change in the political condition of the country be effected. And this without giving serious ground for complaint to the party most injured by it, or even in the slightest degree wounding their national pride.

That Lord Durham's plan, very imperfectly understood by them, should have encountered opposition on the part of a certain influential class of the citizens of Montreal, is no evidence of its inefficiency. Unfortunately for Canada, any scheme having for its object the general good of the country is made too much the subject, not of mere party, but of individual criticism, and is measured too much by the standard of individual interest, to meet the support that is necessary to fruition. With a very few honorable exceptions, the British inhabitants of Montreal acted, during the period of Lord Durham's government of Canada, not in parties or in accordance with certain acknowledged and defined principles, bearing on the general prosperity; but each, influenced by personal interests, appeared to have a political code of his own, which, whenever an opportunity offered, he was sure to intrude upon the High Commissioner. This was a bitter cause of complaint with Lord Durham, who could not tolerate the vulgar assumption of those who pestered him with proposals and schemes of the most absurd, and obviously the most selfish description, and who consequently impressed him very unfavorably with the British population as a body. There was one individual in Montreal whose pertinacity on this subject induced a strong feeling of aversion in the mind of Lord Durham; and this man, wealthy but of obscure origin, and indifferently educated, was in the habit of expressing his views and wishes in so confident and arrogant a manner, that his Lordship had, more than once, according to his own avowal to me, experienced difficulty in suppressing the inclination he felt to desire him never to intrude himself upon him again.

The utter impossibility of any measure, however great or important, giving satisfaction to a people so divided in feeling—so disunited in purpose—and yet so devoted to minor interests, was obvious, and they were necessarily, from the reasons just named, the least competent to pronounce a correct or impartial judgment on measures undertaken and followed up for the general good.

The objection raised to the plan of a federal union of the Provinces, by a portion of the Montreal Press, was asserted to be that it would eventually place the country at large in a position to throw off all allegiance to England. This is a view difficult to be sustained. It is impossible to assume any such result could pro-

ceed from the combination of measures proposed to be adopted by Lord Durham in furtherance of this object, and there is but too much reason to infer that the objections of the people of Montreal arose, not from any well founded apprehension in regard to the working of a measure, the details of which had been made known to them, but on the contrary, from their very ignorance of those details.

It was a part of the system contemplated by Lord Durham, that the Legislature of the country should embrace within its sphere of operation, all such measures and improvements as should bear on the general prosperity, while those of a purely local character should be administered as heretofore. Indeed, this was to some extent known to be the case, and they who, as I have before remarked, either from personal or selfish motives, opposed themselves to the measure, attempted to shew that in framing a constitution in some degree assimilated to that of the United States, it necessarily would result that the tie which bound Canada to the Empire must be weakened, and the eventual independence of the country established.

Now, on this head, there are two essential observations to be made. Firstly, this possible disseverment of the British North American Colonies from England had been anticipated, and would have been prevented by the crowning feature in Lord Durham's well-digested plan, which was, that each Province should be represented by two members in the Imperial Parliament. This, assuredly, while giving to British North America an importance commensurate with her growing wealth, and affording her the fullest facility for advocating her own interests, would have proved a much stronger bond of attachment to the Empire than any which has hitherto existed. Secondly, it is but natural to presume, that in the course of time and prosperity, when these fine Provinces shall have risen into a position to enable them to take their stand among the nations of the earth, the chain of nominal dependence which now binds them to England will be cast loose. Nor need this be done violently, or without the continuance of the same maternal and filial relations which at present unite them. That the great body of the British people, who enjoy an almost utter exemption from taxation, while the treasures of the mother country are lavished upon them with an unsparing hand, purveying to all their necessities, should feel it to be their interest to continue dependent on England, may be readily understood; but it is, on the other hand, difficult to comprehend how they should not desire to see their country elevated—after the lapse of much time, it is true—in the progressive scale of nations. Continuing as they now are, the British North American provinces can never attain this position; while, on the contrary, had the plan of a Federal Union, as proposed by Lord Durham, been carried into effect, not only would they have risen, through that union, into rapid consideration, but a means would have been supplied to the mother country of ridding herself gradually of the incubus of expense consequent on their possession. Nations are like families. A colony bears to an empire the same relative position that a child does to its parent: in its infancy it is nurtured with care: in youth, trained in the way that it is necessary to ensure its own means of subsistence; and when it arrives at a stage of manhood, it is left to the exercise of those innate resources which it has been taught to develop. It is quite as preposterous to assume that Canada can continue another century dependent on the generous aid of England, as it would be to expect that a man in the vigor of life and exertion should continue to drain the paternal substance to the dregs.

But while giving all credit to Lord Durham for that vast and comprehensive scheme which was to have united the British North American Provinces to the Mother Country in a bond which distant time alone could sever, I cannot but remark on one seeming contradiction in his Report. To myself, personally, he never, in the course of his numerous conversations with me on the subject, appeared in the slightest degree to countenance the project of a Union of the Canadas, and yet we find him, at page 110 of the Report, recommending that measure as a preparatory step to the attainment of the great and ultimate object he had in view—namely, the Federal Union. My own belief is, that Lord Durham never entertained the question of Union of the two Canadas until after his return home, although it would seem from what he states in the very first page of the book to which I have just referred, that the Federal Union was considered unpracticable by him only on his first arrival in the country. Now, Lord Durham was altogether about six months in the country, and yet, not one month before his departure for England, he appears to have entertained the same aversion from the lesser union subsequently recommended. Witness the following letter addressed to me in Montreal.\*

Annexed are his Lordship's communications to me after his arrival in London: the one on the subject of the Report itself—a copy of which he sent to me—the other on the policy then being pursued by Mr. Poulett Thomson.†

\* See Appendix No. 1.

† See Appendix Nos. 2 and 3.

NOTE.—Since this volume has been compiled, I have been informed by the Hon. Peter McGill of Montreal, who had been much in communication with Lord Durham, during his administration of the affairs of Canada, that Mr. Charles Buller had, on his way from the Upper Province to England, whither it will be recollected, he had followed Lord Durham some time after the departure of that nobleman, called upon him and stated that he (Lord Durham) had abandoned his plan of a Federal Union of the Provinces, in favor of that to which he had hitherto been so strenuously opposed.