

Topics of the Day

AT HOME.

OUR CANADIAN FLAG.

BY ANNIE ROTHWELL.

At first sight it may seem somewhat presumptuous to contravene an opinion which carries such weight as that of Sir Daniel Wilson; but as in the matter of a National flag for Canada all Canadians have equal right to think, perhaps a few words in answer to him on the subject may be permitted.

The writer has heard two objections suggested to the flag proposed by Sir Daniel. To the second quarter it was objected that it gave a fourth part of the space to the recognition of one Province, ignoring all the rest, which was looked on as an injustice, and in connection with the third quarter it was observed that though the members of Confederation were now but seven it was not probable they would always remain so, and were we to go on adding maple leaves as our American friends do stars?

May it not be that Sir Daniel confuses those "Arms" and "distinctive heraldic bearings" which the Provinces, as such, all possess, with the National flag? A shield of many quarterings is honorable, and even if, in course of time, our national shield arrives at the aristocratic "sixteen," (and seven is a very good beginning,) we shall have all the more reason to be proud. But a National flag is a different thing—it should be so simple that every child of the nation can know and understand it, and in most cases they are so. Take for instance some of the republics of to-day; France has a tricolor with no device whatever; Switzerland only a white cross on a plain field, and the flag of our neighbors to the south—we all know it—could scarcely be improved on for simplicity, and we may add, beauty. Of the Empires mighty Russia has an eagle on a plain field, China a dragon on a plain field, Japan a sun on a plain field, and what could be simpler than our own Union Jack? for that is the British flag known, feared and loved in every corner of the world, and not that Royal Standard which is flown on holidays and for crowned heads.

We agree with Sir Daniel Wilson, however, that there is no difficulty in devising a flag for the Dominion—it is already done. Why change that Maple which is indissolubly connected in most minds with Canada, and whose leaves are even now on the shields of three Provinces? What though those leaves in British Columbia measure fourteen inches, while in Manitoba they are small and graceful? What though those in Ontario turn to flame and gold, while those by the Atlantic keep their tender green till they fall? All are alike of Canada, as all her sons and daughters are Canadians, whether they dwell by the ocean, in the mountains, or on the plain.

Let each Province keep and love her own distinctive emblem, the Thistle, the Buffalo, the Crown, the Fleur-de-lys,—as every regiment has its regimental colors—but let us as Canadians, while we continue to give the first quarter of our flag to the Union Jack, faithfully devote the remainder, (omitting all else,) to our lovely Maple wreath and our Beaver, emblems of fertility and industry, on a fair red field. Prince Edward Island, on her shield places her pine tree under the shadow and protection of the Maple; shall we not all be loyal enough to follow her example?

Topics of the Day

ABROAD.

ANOTHER TUNNEL.

BY ENGINEER.

Now-a-days we are staggered by nothing. Difficulties invite us. Hard things tempt us. Impossibilities ensnare us. We want to get not only to the top of everything, but also to the bottom, to turn everything inside out and outside in. When there is a valley in the way, we fill it up. If it be a mountain we slice it down. If a rock is too big that we can't carry it off, we bore through it. We certainly have no time to go round it.

Last week you were told of a tunnel. Here, this week we have another. Last week, between Prince Edward Island and our own mainland, this week between two Tight Little Islands that we know something of, and that we love very well. They are not very far apart, but after all they do not know each other very well, and the new tunnel is supposed to help them to a better acquaintance with each other.

You have all heard of the difficulties that have been known as "The Irish Question," and still you may not understand much about it. At all events you may at least understand that England and Ireland are not good friends sometimes. But I think a good deal of it is imaginary, or caused by imaginary things which is just as bad. It is like two boys, each in a field with a fence so high between them that they could not even peep over to see how much mistaken they were in each other.

Now, although our cousins in Britain have very short journeys to go when they do make a start, they are no great travellers for all that. Perhaps it is because they have such short journeys. Anyway a few hundred miles are nothing to us, not so much as ten would be to them. So, although you may hardly believe it, the people living in England, Scotland, and Ireland, do not see each other very often, or know each other well. Even between England and Scotland this is very much the case, but it is more so between them and Ireland.

Yet it is not far. The channel is not very wide to cross, nor is it expensive. But the sea is the sea, and although the nation is a nation of sailors, it is a very small portion of the main body of the people that care to trust themselves to its dangers and discomforts.

People in both islands seem to be tired of disputes; especially as they think they may arise from ignorance. So they are going to try the experiment of making a tunnel between the two, under the sea, like our own in Prince Edward Island.

Of course it will cost a pile; everything that is good does. But it will open up a traffic between the two islands that has not been dream't of before, and the traffic will bring the people together. They will learn to know one another, to trust one another, and to value one another.

I sometimes wonder why the surplus of people in England and Scotland do not think of Ireland as a field for emigration. It is a beautiful island. It is rosy with hill and valley, field and forest. The people have true blood in their veins and true hearts at bottom. Think, though, how they have been cut off from the world by want of capital. There is no reason but fashion. It has not been the fashion to invest in Ireland, to get up combines and monopolies there, and so it has not been done.