

LOYALTY AND INDEPENDENCE.

IN the olden times, when words were fewer and consequently less available and more correctly employed, men were accustomed to express themselves with that marvellous clearness, force, and simplicity which we cannot imitate now. Language was then the servant of thought, the sunlight which faithfully brought out in visible form the images conceived in the *camera obscura* of the brain. The result was simple fidelity, which is the first principle of art, and no adventitious superfluities were added to enhance the effect at the risk of spoiling the picture. We have altered all this, however. Language is so abundant and our command of it so unlimited that we have fallen into habits of extravagance. We are born to such wealth of words, and educated with so defective a sense of their value and use, that we employ them as the spendthrift does his dollars, as the gorgeous East its "barbaric pearl and gold." The dead fathers of our noble tongue might well turn in their graves at the fashion in which we use the heritage they have left to us.

A famous Frenchman has been credited with the saying that the excess of evil is the source of good. Somewhat similarly the assertion might be ventured that the climax of that condition of human society commonly called "civilization" has a close affinity to barbarism. Men run riot in the wealth of good things which has accumulated in their bursting granaries, and are apt to forget—if they have ever known—the patient and persevering virtues by which these good things have been obtained and the uses for which they are designed.

It might not be hazarding a rash assertion to say that a considerable part of the verbal war of the present day is carried on under a gross misconception of the true meaning of the things in contention. Men will not take time to think; and the errors they fall into for this reason are aggravated by the misapplication of language which is characteristic of a slovenly and extravagant age. Words have no longer with us the meanings given to them by our forefathers; or rather they are taken to mean so many things from the promiscuous and unthinking use made of them, that the signification of any term adopted as a shibboleth is very apt to be a puzzle to the impartial as well as an apple of discord among the disputants themselves.

These reflections have been suggested by certain recent utterances on the platform and in the press on a topic which nearly touches the honour of Canadians from whatsoever point of view it is regarded. The confusion of ideas so widely prevalent in this connection has its source, I believe, not in any important discordance of public sentiment, but in the modern barbarism, before which significant terms are sometimes as pearls before swine. I refer to the matter of "loyalty," and in speaking of Canadians I comprehend under the term all persons, whether born in the Dominion or more immediately under the shadow of the throne, who have permanently adopted this land as their home.

That member of a civilized community who has no sense of the sentiment known as loyalty is deficient in a quality essential to the character of a reliable citizen. Without loyalty there can be no public spirit, and without public spirit there can be no independence—a condition which alone guarantees stability to the body politic. Hence it is important that we have a clear and unmistakable conception of the nature of this obligation which goes by the name of loyalty; and such a conception can be reached only by a consideration of the meaning and power of the term loyalty in its application to the circumstances of Canada. I have said that this matter touches the honour of Canadians; and it is to be trusted that this interest is not an inactive factor in the endeavour to attain a fair understanding of the public obligation in this respect.

In approaching this subject the essential distinctions between the two political virtues called patriotism and loyalty must always be borne in mind. Everybody understands the distinction, but not everybody is careful to remember it. Patriotism grows from our soil and loyalty from our laws. The one springs from human nature, the other is a result of human institutions. Patriotism lives upon the past and loyalty upon the present. Where there is no call for the one there may be an imperative demand for the other. We do hear of the existence of Canadian patriotism, and the fact of its existence is a source of pride; but it must be remembered that anything like a persistent assertion of patriotism by those entitled to cherish the proud sentiment is ungenerous towards those others whom we welcome to our land as members of our community, and who, while earnestly and honestly identifying themselves with us as citizens of the same expanding commonwealth, are precluded by their circumstances from as yet sharing in that sentiment. Their patriotism they left beneath the old roof-tree, and a new birth awaits their children here. Our patriotism is still but in its infancy, but a great future opens before it. From the stranger who

seeks our shores we have a right to expect, not that which he cannot give but that which he can—not patriotism, but loyalty.

Now what is loyalty? Rightly understood there is no room for controversy in the matter. Loyalty is not a respecter of persons, save in so far as an individual or an office represents that to which loyalty is due. By an extension of the term arising from long usage men speak of loyalty to the sovereign, and feel it, because in the sovereign they see the representative of all that they reverence in their laws and institutions. It is a sentiment or fealty then not properly due to an individual but to a system. "The word *loyalty*," says Trench, " . . . being derived from *loi*, expresses, properly, that fidelity which one owes according to law, and does not necessarily include that attachment to the royal person which, happily, we in England have been able further to throw into the word." So that, by the very nature of the term itself, loyalty is neither more nor less than fidelity to that public law, well tried and approved, which we have set up and accepted for our guidance and government. He who pays this debt pays all that is legally due from him. He may do more; but his obligation as an honourable member of the commonwealth is discharged at this point. The blind and indiscriminating devotion to a person or cause, around which history and romance throw a delusive halo, excites our admiration or our sympathy for acts of heroic self-sacrifice or suffering; but the mis-called loyalty which inspires such devotion is not the real sentiment itself, but an instance of transferred allegiance. "Honour the king"—not necessarily the man; because the king is the impersonation of the law to which in reality our loyalty is due.

We, too, are friends to loyalty; we love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them.

The prevalent misconception of the true nature of the obligation implied by the word loyalty has exposed to undeserved reproach Canadians who, in the matter of allegiance, offer their first fruits on the altar of their own land. The connection would be a tyrannous as well as a pusillanimous one which took offence at this. No graver injustice could be offered to the robust progeny of an old stock than to interpret the assertion of its self-reliance as an act of rebellion. In all ages it has been the rule for parental authority to cease at a certain point. In the very constitution of things the old should lean on the young rather than the young be dependent on the old. Nature has made this law, and it cannot be repealed. Nature does more, however—and this should not be forgotten. She sends the children forth from the parental roof to plant themselves on other soil, and take root there and flourish; but she does not dissolve or weaken the bonds which bind all the family together. A common pulsation, a common sympathy is felt throughout the whole. The parent stem, by abdicating authority and releasing from obedience when authority would be unwise and obedience difficult, retains the reverence due to it as the source from which all this vigorous life has proceeded. The less it demands the more it will receive. But the parent never thinks of insisting that the son's first allegiance is still due to the old home and not to the new one.

After all, it is wholly amongst ourselves that the reproach of disloyalty is flung at the heads of those who raise the question of independence. It excites no such emotion in England. No higher or more flattering testimony can be borne to the quality of the grand old stock from which we spring than the very assertion of our desire and ability to stand alone. It is the warrant of our legitimacy, the proof that we are not degenerate. It is an injustice, which ought to be deeply resented, to proclaim that a desire for independence implies impatience of our connection with England or hostility to the Mother Country. The bond which holds the race together will grow all the stronger when the different communities into which it is divided are able to stand on their own strength, and to respect themselves for being able to do so. England wants no effeminate offspring hanging for life to her apron-strings. It is not her nature to encourage such unworthy dependence, nor indeed the nature of her children to need it. In nations as in families, blood will tell; and the sooner we can proclaim ourselves capable of standing alone the sooner will England feel that we are worthy of our descent. This connection between England and Canada, in so far, at least, as it is one of dependence on our side and of protection upon that of England, should for the advantage of both parties terminate as soon as practicable. Political separation does not involve the disruption of the race, or the extinction of those sympathies which must always pervade every branch of the great family.

L. M.

DR. HOLMES gives a recipe for a popular novel:—"Hero—heroine—mamma—papa—uncle—sister, and so on. Love—obstacles—misery—tears—despair—glimmer of hope—unexpected solution of difficulties—happy finale. Landscape for background according to season. Plants of each month got from botanical calendars."