

TRUTH FOR THE PEOPLE

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THE LAST YEAR OF OUR TEENS.

In another year Canada will be twenty. Although not yet out of her teens she has a development to show of which every Canadian may well be proud.

What the history of Confederation has been our readers know, but a brief review of the part may not be uninteresting now that we have reached the nineteenth anniversary of our existence.

After many bitter years of strife and strain between the French Province on the St. Lawrence and the English Province to the west it became at last plain to every Canadian statesman that the union of Upper and Lower Canada, effected in 1841, could not much longer be maintained. The year 1866 dawned amidst a wrangle of newspapers and a din of platforms. Mr. John A. Macdonald was at the head of the English Parliamentarians and M. George E. Cartier led the French. But it was not between these two diplomatic men that the strife subsisted. Their hands were fast locked in political friendship, for the success of the one was involved with the fortunes of the other. Upon the one hand were the Reformers of Ontario with George Brown at their head crying out for Representation by Population; while upon the other stood the French in a solid phalanx trembling for their privileges as a peculiar people and a peculiar Province. Macdonald acknowledged that Ontario had justice in her cry, but it was not to his interest to break with Cartier. So for many years this Province had good reason to say that her neck was under the heel of the French Province. In 1868 affairs had reached a deadlock and one politician looked helplessly at the other. But when the situation became at its worst, inspiration came from the Provinces down by the sea.

About this time New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward's Island began, each, to feel its insignificance and political isolation, and resolved to form themselves into a Maritime Confederacy. Delegates from each Province met at Charlottetown, in the little meadow-land, to discuss a plan of federation; when suddenly there descended upon them a number of representatives from the Province of Canada. In effect these delegates said: "You maritime people have shown us the way out of disputes which have distracted us, and we therefore propose that you extend your scheme of a Maritime Union by joining us in forming one grand Confederation of all the Provinces from Newfoundland to Vancouver's land." The proposal was enthusiastically received, and during the Autumn the delegates assembled in conference in the City of Quebec, and there drafted a measure which, a few months later, was declared by royal proclamation to be the Constitution of a new English Dominion in North America.

Immediately after the proclamation establishing the Dominion had been published, Lord Monck, the Governor General, called upon Mr. John A. Macdonald to form an Administration, and in the name of

the sovereign conferred upon him the Order of Knighthood. It was hoped that under the new regime the old parties, Conservative, Liberal and Clear Gilt, which had maintained bitter strife for so many years, would disappear from the scene. With a view to accomplishing a result so desirable, the Administration was composed of men of all shades of political opinion, a just representation being given in the Council to the every race and religious body. But among the Reformers of English-speaking Canada, and the Reformers of the French section, were some ambitious and able men who believed, and not without good reason, that in the new Administration the old Conservative party would follow its own inclinations and somewhat of its traditions. These men had patriotically desisted from obstruction or giving aid to the Coalition Government while it was engaged in bringing the Union about; but no sooner had the wheels of the new system begun to revolve than they commenced a vigorous onslaught upon it. As rigidly as in the days of William Lyon Mackenzie was the line between Reformers and Conservatives drawn; nor was the political feud which was now engendered less bitter, less ferocious or less implacable than the party hatred which divided the people in the stormiest days of our history. Mr. George Brown, rugged and impetuous of character, uncompromising in principle, and heavy-handed and relentless as an opponent, began a crusade against the new Administration; and he was zealously seconded by *Confreres Rouges* in Quebec. But Sir John came into the world under a luckier star than shone over the cradle of Mr. Brown. He had more tact, more shrewdness, and more patience. All his life long he had studied human nature, especially the weaker side of it. He never held aloof from his followers but affectionately hid his hand upon the shoulders of one or cracked a friendly joke at the expense of another. His followers loved him and his will or his word were always a law. But a storm was gathering under which the head of Sir John was to bend. Our readers know what the storm was. The Conservative Government were charged with having corruptly given the Pacific Railway Charter to Sir Hugh Allan in consideration of an enormous sum of money, nearly \$250,000—advanced by Sir Hugh to Sir John Macdonald, Mr. Laframboise and other ministers to aid them in carrying their elections. The charge never was disproved, and Sir John said that in the election his "friends subscribed like gentlemen," while the Reformers went "snaking about private drawers to see what they could steal." This referred to the incriminating telegrams pilfered by McKim, and sold by him to the opponent of the Government. The public was aroused to indignation at the disclosure, and Sir John said his administration fell.

Mr. Alexander Mackenzie, the Liberal leader, was now called upon by Lord Duf-

ferin to form an Administration. The new Premier was supported by a large following of old Liberals, and Conservatives who had crossed the lines when they believed their leader guilty of the edious corruption laid to his charge. It was not long before it was plain, however, that the stars were fighting against Mr. Mackenzie. Bid harvests came, followed by evil times, and although it lay in no man's power to compel the corn to spring or the sun to shine, he was held, by needy men, to no small account for the bitter days that had fallen upon them. The Administration had an able Finance Minister, Mr. (now Sir) Richard J. Cartwright, but he professed himself unable to kindle life in dead industries, or to set the wheels of commerce revolving any faster than the laws of trade willed that they should go. Civil Government had to be maintained, but year by year income was less than the expenditure, till at last it was whispered that the Finance Minister proposed resorting to direct taxation to meet his annual deficits. Toward the close of the Parliamentary term thousands of workmen who could obtain no employment, and who had not sufficient means to take them out of the country to seek bread, gathered about the Ministry and besought aid. Sir Richard assured them that his heart bled for their plight, but he informed them that, confronted with the task of removing such a sore depression, Government was only as a fly on the wheel.

Now had arrived Sir John A. Macdonald's time, and he was not slow in turning it to account. He called together the suffering workmen, and assured them that if they would reinstate him in office he would establish a "Broad National Policy," under which home industry would be fostered and native labor utilized. He explained to them that he would effect this by putting a duty which would amount to prohibition upon all imports which could be manufactured in the country. They took him at his word, and in 1876 sent him back to office with overwhelming numbers to support him.

Four years trial, in a measure, vindicated the predictions of the veteran Conservative, and at the end of that time, appealing to the people bear witness that his promises had been redeemed, he was re-elected and again with a handsome following. His opponents affirmed, when heads had been counted, that too many supported him; and said that too large a following is little better than a bare majority, because it is in greater danger of splitting. But Sir John retorted with an anecdote: "No; a political following may be described in the words of the squaw respecting her whiskey, 'a little too much is just enough.' The chieftain is yet in power and his followers affirm that the reins will remain in his hands as long as he lives to hold them. This it would be hard to settle; for the followers of Mr. Blake predict a glorious triumph next autumn for Reform, public

purity, and wise and economic administration. Sir John is now in his seventy-first year, and although weak and ill during the greater portion of the late session, is now said to be in perfect health. His faculties, even as acute and vigorous as they ever were; and we may be sure that he takes solid food, else the *Globe* would have announced it in jocular capitals: "The Premier reduced to the exclusive use of liquids!"

But many a page might be written about what Canada has achieved in Education, in manufacture, in agriculture, in art, literature and science since entering into wedlock. We shall give a few of our most conspicuous gains as they show by figures, since 1867. We have nearly 11,000 miles of railways in operation, and no important section is without an iron road. We have increased our floating tonnage from 160,000 to 600,000; in paid-up bank capital we have increased from \$28,000,000 to \$109,000,000; and we have in operation 2,384 miles of canals. In 1868-69 our total exports were \$57,000,000; in 1872-73 they were nearly \$100,000,000. Our debt is heavy, but the annual interest upon it *per capita* is only \$1.77. In time of domestic tumult or invasion we shall not be found defenseless. We have a force of nearly 60,000 well-disciplined volunteers. In every portion of the country factories engaged in the manufacture of almost everything needed in civilized life are in operation. We possess forests of enormous value, and the worth of our fisheries and minerals is great. We have a total area of 3,470,257 square miles, and in our Northwest territories alone, the testimony of eminently practical scientists reveals, we have grain-land sufficient to maintain over a hundred millions of souls. It is this region, fruitful in soil and temperate in climate, that the Pacific Railway Company is throwing so rapidly open to Europeans. Upon that territory, in the year 1882 alone, there settled from abroad 120,000 persons. Who shall say what measure of greatness and glory Canada may not one day achieve?

But we have to learn to be loyal to one another; to have faith in the possibilities of our young nation and not threaten wreck and ruin because the weevil comes into the wheat, or the Government for the time being, is unable to produce sunshine by legislation. We should regard ourselves as sufficient unto ourselves; and when we have a dispute as to which end of a long line is largest we ought to be above running to the judicial committee of the Imperial Privy Council to settle the matter.

We shall have to get out of our orange cries and sub-
Frango, and join heartily with our
dians, as the arbiters of a future great
we but make our steps aright.

It would be too much to expect
men who have done discredit to
political life to become good
hour in the day; but surely
and a useful public life.