

The outer frame-work of the Canadian nation has been almost completed, but the question presses on us, 'what kind of nation is it to be'? Is it to be a huge "city of pigs," to use Iliato's phrase; or is it to be a land of high-souled men and women, and so a land to be loved wherever its people roam. Judging by the general tone of the public press, I for one am often saddened beyond the power of words to express. The ideals presented to us are increase of population—no matter what its quality or what the general standard of living and thinking, and increase of wealth—no matter how obtained or how saved, whether by sponging on the Mother Country or grovelling at the feet of multi-millionaires. It is little wonder that the average tone of our people corresponds to these ideals. What threatens the life of Canada most seriously? Not, as many suppose, the drink traffic, the evils of which have been intensified by the remedies zeal without knowledge urges and by immoral proposals to abolish it without compensating those who under the sanction of law have invested their all in a lawful business. No! rather the uncleanness, which does not show its face on the streets; the vulgar and insolent materialism of thought and life, which is eating into the heart of our people, and which expresses itself even in language used at school-boards and in an aggressive commercialism which penetrates to the innermost courts of the sanctuary; contempt for and evasion of law, which is aggravated by "brass mouths and iron lungs" demanding laws which are in advance of, and hinder, instead of furthering, the growth of law within; slavery to and self-seeking in party machines, and the corruption and insincerity of political leaders who plead in their defence that they dare not go too far in advance of the people; haste to be rich; mutual distrust instead of hearty co-operation between employers and employed; a readiness on the part of labour to take unfair advantage of capital when it sees a good chance, and a still greater willingness on the part of capital to treat the labourer as a "hand" and not as a partner; a growing distrust of the church by the masses, and a growing tendency in the church to put its trust in external things which can always be measured by statistics instead of in those spiritual ideas of which it is the professed custodian, and the influence of which no statistics can measure; these and kindred evils