

## CURRENT EVENTS AND OPINIONS.

THE pleasant words which the people of Quebec and their visitors have been interchanging about the patriotic affection of the Province for the Mother Country would fall sweetly on the ear of the United Empire Loyalist until he was informed that the "Mother Country" was France. There can no longer be any doubt as to the expansion of the French nationality in Canada, as to the increasing intensity of the national sentiment, or as to the revival of the connection between the daughter and the parent. We shall, presently, have to consider what will be the effect upon our councils of association with a community planted in the midst of British communities, but scarcely more British than is Old France. A strong light would at once be thrown upon the situation in case our Mother Country should be drawn into a quarrel with the Mother Country of the people of Quebec, as, if the Egyptian question remains unsettled, she well may. A summons to the militia of the Dominion to take the field would, in that event, meet with a strange response from the French Province. Yet New France owes her existence to British connection. Left to the natural influences and tendencies of the Continent she would almost certainly have been assimilated and absorbed. There would probably have remained of her, at most, only a social remnant with a peculiar tinge of character like that which has supplied a repertory of picturesque subjects for the tales of Mr. Cabel. British tutelage has preserved her distinct existence, while her population has been multiplied twenty-fold, since she passed from French to British rule, and is now spreading so rapidly on both sides of the line that it is difficult to say what the boundaries of the French nationality will be. New France, though conquered, has had little reason to complain of her destiny. From association with a British Colony she obtained what she certainly would never have obtained from the Bourbons or the Jesuits—parliamentary government, the freedom of the press, religious liberty, trial by jury, personal liberty, public education, and the abolition of the feudal tenures. She has received, in short, all that which France gained by the Revolution, without undergoing a century of political convulsions, civil bloodshed, and ruinous wars. To change the political nature of the French peasant, and make him the full equal of the Anglo-Saxon in independence of spirit and native capacity for self-government, was not in the legislator's power. Nor was it in his power, when he emancipated from compulsory thralldom to the seigneur, also to emancipate from voluntary thralldom to the priest. Never, perhaps, did conquest appear either in so mild or in so beneficent a guise as it did when it presented itself in the person of that gentle hero who preferred the authorship of Gray's elegy to victory. Voltaire showed discernment, if not patriotism, when he celebrated the taking of Quebec as a triumph of liberty over despotism; and if a sense of substantial benefits could prevail over the promptings of national pride, French Canadians might well keep the anniversary as a season of political rejoicing. But neither this nor the pleasant fact that, in spite of all that has been said about the inherent inability of the Englishman to live in amity with other races, our social relations with the French are entirely kind, can make New France British, or annihilate the obstacle which her unyielding nationality presents to the unification of British North America.

IN the North-West the promise of a golden harvest has banished the despondency which ensued upon the inevitable collapse of the boom. Since the discovery of a sufficient supply of fuel there has been no real ground for doubt as to the ultimate capabilities of the region. But these capabilities cannot possibly be developed without a good system of railroads. Land fifty miles from a railroad, though it yielded a thousand bushels to the acre, might as well be in the moon. The single line running from Ocean to Ocean, while it may connect the different provinces of the Dominion together for political and military purposes, cannot open up the North-West. Its effect so far has been to draw out the population in a long string instead of securing the advantages of compact settlement. If the money which is being spent in carrying the road over the Rocky Mountains had been laid out on roads in the Prairie region, the political union with British Columbia might not have been effected, but the commercial results would have been infinitely better. Supposing the vision of diverting the Asiatic trade from San Francisco to a port in British Columbia to be realized, what will Manitoba gain by seeing the cars laden with tea fly past her to the East? A political object is, as the Bystander has always admitted, fully as well entitled to consideration as an economical object; but both cannot be paramount at once, and the paramount object of our statesmen in dealing with the North-West has not been economical but political. If the success of agriculture and commerce has been retarded, this, in the main, is the account of the delay. Access to the best

and nearest markets for agricultural machinery and everything else which the region cannot produce for itself is also an absolutely necessary condition of the prosperity of the North-West. This the people must see, and the more resolutely they demand the removal of the Customsline the better not only for themselves, but for the rest of the Dominion. If they press that question they will find plenty of support in the East. They seem to be greatly bent on the construction of the Hudson's Bay line, not only on commercial but on political grounds; for their political tendency at present appears to be not towards annexation, but towards independence of the Ottawa Government and direct communication with England. The attempt to make this vast region a tributary, whether commercial or political, has failed, as it was sure to fail. The power of resistance possessed by the North-West is not to be measured by the number of its votes at Ottawa, as, unless the fair demands of its people are granted, will speedily appear.

IF Cleveland is nominated by the Democrats at Chicago, as at present seems likely, he will stand a very good chance of election, and if he is elected he will probably be a very good President. What is needed in that place now is not sentimental fidelity to a historic cause, but practical loyalty to reform. If the Democratic party could fairly come forward as the party of reform, it would have the good wishes of all the true friends of the country, and would scarcely fail soon to find itself in power; for the people, however bewitched by names and excited by faction fights, have intelligence enough to see that they pay, with the sweat of their brows, for the present abuses of government. But it is not easy to come forward as the party of reform when such an organization of scoundrelism as Tammany forms no inconsiderable portion of your forces. It is hard to understand how men who are simply respectable Conservatives, like the chief men of the Democratic party, continue to act in alliance with a street mob headed by thieves. To the slave-owners, of course, while they were the core of the party, the quality of their Northern allies mattered nothing, so long as slavery could be upheld. The Tammany delegates are at Chicago vigorously playing their own game. General Butler, too, it seems, in accepting the Greenback nomination was providing himself with leverage for acting on the Democratic Convention. These are sinister omens. The Democratic party has an established reputation for blundering; but its blunders are mainly the normal activity of the villainous elements which it contains, and from which we can hardly hope to see it shake itself free. There are whispers still of Mr. Tilden as a candidate, in spite of his positive disclaimer; but it would be sheer suicide to oppose political decrepitude to the popular dash and energy of Mr. Blaine. It is admitted that Mr. Bayard has a following; but he is held, as was said before, to be disqualified, in spite of his evident recommendations, by a speech against civil war, made in 1861 when, as Mr. Blaine has just been reminding us in his history, the Northern leaders were themselves offering, by the Crittenden compromise, to establish slavery forever, if only they could thereby pacify the South, and preserve the Union. When people have not sense enough to see that to set aside their best man on such a ground is absurd, can it be said that they have sense enough to govern themselves? Not till the Democratic platform has been published, and the Democratic candidates nominated will it be safe to predict the result of the independent secession from the Republican party. At present the seceders seem to be numerous, influential, and in earnest. What is certain is that the effects of the rupture in the Republican party will not pass away without suggesting some serious considerations to those who have persuaded themselves that the party system is to be accepted as the permanent basis of elective government.

THE animosities of most civil wars die when the sword is once sheathed and the grass has grown over the graves. Trophies there are none, and the political memory of the multitude is short. No spectre now hovers over the blood-stained fields of La Vendee, and in the United States, though but twenty years have passed since Appomattox, the ashes of hatred, once styled undying, are already cold. But the feud which divided the English race in America a century ago, wretched as it was has been stereotyped by the folly which drove the Tories into new settlements, while organs for the perpetuation of animosity unhappily exist upon both sides. The American demagogue in his Fourth of July orations continues periodically to hector and vituperate, and his rhetorical congener and rival, the spouter of United Empire Loyalism, continues periodically to respond. The weary listener asks himself whether these blasts and counter-blasts of windy and unveracious declamation are to go on for ever, and whether the end of the world is to find two sets of orators hurling at each other bombastic narratives of Lexington and Lundy's Lane. The series of events which the people of the United States celebrated on Friday last as transcending all the annals of mankind in glory and importance can be