

Thought outruns the steam car, and hope outflies the telegraph. We live more in ten years in this era than the Patriarch did in a thousand. The Patriarch might outlive the palm tree which was planted to commemorate his birth, and yet not see so many wonders as we have witnessed since the constitution we are now discussing was formed. What marvels have not been wrought in Europe and America from 1840 to 1860? And who can say the world, or our own portion of it more particularly, is incapable of maintaining to the end of the century the ratio of the past progress? I for one cannot presume to say so. I look to the future of my adopted country with hope, though not without anxiety. I see in the not remote distances, one great nationality, bound, like the shield of Achilles, by the blue rim of Ocean. I see it quartered into many communities, each disposing of its internal affairs, but all bound together by free institutions, free intercourse, and free commerce. I see within the round of that shield the peaks of the Western Mountains and the crests of the Eastern waves, the winding Assiniboine, the five-fold lakes, the St. Lawrence, the Ottawa, the Saguenay, the St. John, and the basin of Minas. By all these flowing waters in all the valleys they fertilize, in all the cities they visit in their courses, I see a generation of industrious, contented, moral men, free in name and in fact—men capable of maintaining, in peace and in war, a constitution worthy of such a country!"

There are, moreover, throughout the volume of speeches and addresses on "British American Union," passages which appear to be as reverent in their character, as they are eloquent in their language. We deeply regret that our space, and the plan of our work make it impossible for us to lighten this sketch with extensive extracts from Mr. McGee's writings. The manner, for example, in which the political and social systems of the United States re-act upon one another is frequently pointed out with graphic power. He might have, though we do not know that he has, warned his readers that liberty in America may become, for there is great danger of her becoming, a suicide; and expire wretchedly from some act of unpremeditated violence; for authority, as it has been truly said, is as necessary to the preservation of liberty as judges are to the administration of law. No violence therefore is done either to sentiment or experience in asserting, that they are most vigilant for freedom, who are most conservative of authority. After this manner Mr. McGee speaks, in closing his speech on the motion for an address to Her Majesty in favor of Confederation:

"We need in these Provinces, and we can bear a large infusion of authority. I am not at all afraid this constitution errs on the side of too great conservatism. If it be found too conservative now, the downward tendency in political ideas which characterizes this democratic age is a sufficient guarantee for amendment. Its conservatism is the principle on which this instrument is strong, and worthy of the support of every colonist, and through which it will secure the warm approbation of the Imperial authorities. We have here no traditions and ancient