

rooms, &c. Some idea of this magnificent room may be formed from the fact, that it will contain about 5000 square feet more than the City Concert Hall, and that it will accommodate, comfortably sitting, two thousand persons, or, when used for public meetings, &c., 3000 to 4000 persons.

The grand or principal entrance to the hall will be on Victoria square. There will also be entrances on Craig street and Fortification lane.

The hall is to be built in the most solid and substantial manner, of Montreal limestone, after the plans and designs of J. W. Hopkins, Esq., architect, by Messrs. Howley & Sheridan, who have taken the contract for the whole work.

Ground was broken on the 24th September, and the contractors are pushing forward the work with energy, and will have the foundations well in and secure this fall. The corner stone will be fittingly laid, with appropriate ceremonies, on the next St. Patrick's Day.

The style of architecture of the hall is purely Irish, copied from Cormack's Chapel on the Rock of Cashel. This chapel was erected one thousand years ago, viz., A.D. 850, by Cormack Mac Cuilman, King of Munster, and Archbishop of Cashel.

### TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

WE are sensible that for some weeks past we have, from causes which are so generally known that we need not advert to them, trespassed somewhat upon the forbearance of our readers. The purchase of this journal from the insolvent estate of the late publishers is particularly gratifying to us, as it removes many of the difficulties which have beset us. Still it must be patent to all that in the uncertain, and, to speak plainly, unpleasant position in which we have been placed during the past two months, it was impossible to make new arrangements, or even in some instances to complete those which were commenced. We may still have, for a short time, to crave the indulgence of our readers, more particularly with reference to illustrations, but we are pleased to be able to state that negotiations are in progress which will, we are convinced, when completed, give satisfaction to all. Every pledge made at the commencement of this volume will be redeemed, and the costly experiment of publishing an ILLUSTRATED READER will be fairly tried. We are not without strong hopes that the increase to our subscription list will enable us to continue the illustrations permanently, and with this view, we ask our friends to aid us in swelling our circulation, and thereby strengthen our hands to compete with the flood of foreign and sensational periodicals with which Canada is deluged. No effort will be spared by either publisher or editor to infuse new vigour into the READER, and to render it more worthy of the position it occupies as the only literary paper published in Canada.

### THE UNION OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

THIS question has again been brought prominently before the public, but the field of controversy has been transferred from the colonies to the British metropolis. Mr. Joseph Howe, of Nova Scotia, re-opened the campaign in a pamphlet in which he denounced the contemplated Confederation of British North America as a measure which would be attended with ruinous consequences to the Maritime Provinces, while it would be highly prejudicial to Imperial interests. Dr. Tupper, the chief of the Nova Scotian Government, and one of the delegates from that province to arrange a plan of Union, has answered Mr. Howe in a letter to the Secretary for the Colonies. As neither of these productions is of much value, as bearing on the merits of the subject at issue, we shall not attempt to repeat the writers' arguments, or what they are pleased to call such; and the personalities in

which they both indulge, preclude their utterances from our columns, which eschew mere party or partizan warfare. We shall only say on that head, that Mr. Howe's reasoning would apply with almost equal force against the union of the United Kingdom, of Germany, or Italy, as against that of the British Provinces, and that Mr. Tupper's great object is to prove Mr. Howe's inconsistency, inasmuch as in former days that gentleman was one of the most zealous advocates of the scheme which he now so bitterly condemns. In that respect, the Nova Scotian delegate has been, we regret to say, but too successful. Mr. Howe might entertain what views he pleased on the matter of Confederation, and although his past public services, and his reputation as a politician, might entitle him to a respectful consideration of his opinions, especially in Nova Scotia, it is not at all likely that the people of British North America would be led by him further than their own convictions coincided with his. In Canada, at least, we do not swear by Mr. Joseph Howe, though doing full justice to his talents, as displayed in former years. But in the present instance, Mr. Tupper's exposure of his tergiversation, duplicity or folly, is so complete, that it can scarcely be read without a mingled feeling of pain, shame and surprise—*pain and shame that a man who has filled such a position in these Provinces as he has, should be guilty of the meanness of belying his former sentiments; surprise, that he should be silly enough to do so, with the record of these sentiments in the possession of his opponents.* Mr. Tupper has convicted him out of his own mouth, his speeches and writings have been produced in evidence against him, and nothing short of the improbable plea of forgery can save him from the reprobation and contempt of all lovers of manliness and truth. We imagined that when Mr. Howe came fresh from Washington, last spring, with his fictitious account of Fenian preparations for the invasion of these Provinces, and of the myriads of discharged American soldiers who were ready to join them, we imagined that he would have been satisfied with that flight into the region of romance, and had been taught a useful lesson by the failure. But it seems not, and we suspect the habit has become incurable with him. Yet we cannot see the necessity of such a course, for he might quite as well have said that he had changed his views on the Union question, in consequence of the changes that had taken place on this continent within the last few years, that the rebellion of the Southern States had metamorphosed the adjoining Republic into a great military power, and that another Confederacy in their neighbourhood was no longer safe or possible. All this and more, Mr. Howe might have asserted, but, then, he would be no longer the infallible guide that he wished his admirers to believe that he was, and so he sacrificed his rectitude to his vanity. Truly, British North American statesmen are not likely to be in the odour of sanctity in England for some time to come; the Toronto *Globe* has described some of them as sots incapable of attending to the duties of the departments over which they preside, and Mr. Tupper has shewn "the foremost man of all British North America," as his eulogists call him, to be nothing but a clever charlatan, who has invented a tale of danger and distress to deceive and mislead those who may place faith in his doubtful patriotism and deep-mouthed loyalty. One thing is certain, however, and that is, that Mr. Joseph Howe has forever ruined himself in the estimation of every honest man in England who takes an interest in colonial affairs and has read Mr. Tupper's pamphlet. The worst of the matter is that he will not be the only sufferer, but that while debasing himself, he will lower the colonial character in the eyes of the world.

But though there can be no denial of the ability with which Mr. Tupper exposes Mr. Howe's duplicity on this Union question, we cannot extend the same praise to the remaining portion of his letter to the Colonial Secretary. In this he undertakes to show that the British Parliament can pass what measures it pleases, regardless of the wishes of the people,

and that the Provincial legislatures possess the same right, in their respective jurisdictions. He consequently claims that the Imperial Parliament is justified, if not bound, to pass an act uniting these North American Possessions of the Crown, at the request of their several legislatures, without considering whether the act were or were not in accordance with the popular will. In short, Mr. Tupper argues that the public have nothing to do with the affair, it is a question for their representatives alone to decide, and he quotes divers learned authorities, from Bacon and Somers to Blackstone and Burke, and thence downward to Mr. Joseph Howe, in support of the position he thus assumes. Now, we have no inclination to dispute this doctrine. We freely admit the omnipotence of Parliament under the British system of Government, nay, we are willing to concede that the Queen, Lords and Commons can perform the impossible feat of "making a man a woman," the supposed only barrier to their power. But in the matter of the union of the provinces, we have not to deal with a point of law, but with a question of justice, equity and policy. A Provincial Parliament has the power and the abstract right to disfranchise the great mass of their constituents, as was lately done in Nova Scotia to a considerable extent; they may enact almost any vicious measure, to the injury of the community, and contrary to the wishes of those who elected them; they may directly or indirectly subvert much of the existing constitution and many of the existing laws, but what it be contended that the British Government and Legislature must necessarily give effect by Imperial interference to such changes, because illegal or constitutional theory they have the right to do so? Their duty is to consult the wishes of the colonial people, before those of the Colonial Parliaments. This they have always done, to the best of their judgment; and we are confident that they will be guided by the same principle when the question of Confederation comes before them.

We are sincerely desirous of the union of the British Provinces of North America, on the assent of a majority at least of the people of each of the colonies is, a *sine qua non*, a condition precedent, which is absolutely indispensable. In Canada, the legislature has declared in favor of the measure by large majorities of both houses, and the tacit consent of the people may fairly be inferred from the absence of opposition on their part by petition or otherwise, in New Brunswick the people and the legislature have voted for it, and in Nova Scotia it has been carried in the legislature, but so far, the people do not seem to concur in the views of their representatives. In fact, Mr. Tupper admits that the electors, if appealed to, would reject Confederation. He says: "No one, my Lord, knows better than Mr. Howe that if the legislature were dissolved to-morrow, expressly on the Confederate question, it would be impossible to obtain the unbiased judgment of the province. The measure providing for the support of common school education, by direct taxation, which Mr. Howe advocated so ably, but never ventured a peril his administration by passing, has been perched on the statute-book by the present Government in a spirit of self-sacrifice, at the shrine of the public good. For every vote that would be influenced in a general election by the question of Confederation, two would be given on the odious subject of direct taxation, so revolting to all young countries." It will be seen, then, that be the causes what they may, the people of Nova Scotia would cast their votes against the contemplated union. The fact is evident whether their motives be those ascribed by Mr. Tupper, or those insisted upon by Mr. Howe. Of Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland we shall only say that, up to this time, they may be considered, the one as unfavorable, the other as doubtful or averse to the measure. But Confederation could be effected independently of them; and the Northwest and the Pacific colonies must be left to the future.

Under these circumstances, it becomes necessary to ask:—What ought to be done? If possible, it will be doubted if it were wise or