

*OUR FEDERAL CONSTITUTION.*

At various periods in the history of Europe, from the earliest records down to the present time, under the most varying conditions, and with varying success, attempts have been made to combine the maximum of strength in the central government with the maximum of freedom in the control of local affairs by local authorities. And what has been attempted in Europe has also been attempted in the offshoots of European nations in different parts of the world. The problem which the founders of the North American republic essayed to solve is the same which confronted the founders of the commonwealth of Rome in the earliest periods of its history, and in neither case can the solution be said to have been altogether satisfactory. The Swiss Federation was the work of statesmen in the Middle Ages, and we in Canada have only just completed a task of a similar character. In Australia and South Africa plans are being laid for federated governments, and these confederations will in time form the basis of the still greater confederation embracing not only the parent state but its colonial possessions all over the world.

That a subject of such great historical as well as political interest, and on which such vast practical issues depend, should be the theme of discussion in the press and on the platform, as well as of mature consideration by those charged with judicial functions and by writers able to give it the time and thought which its importance demands, was naturally to be expected. In Dr. Bourinot's "Federal Government in Canada," published in 1889, we have an historical sketch of the events which led up to Confederation, and of the principal features of the Constitution established by the British North America Act. In the work on parliamentary procedure and parliamentary government under the provisions of that Act by the same author, and in the great constitutional work of Dr. Todd, we have very full information as to the principles laid down in that Act, and the methods of constitutional procedure based upon them. Mr. J. R. Cartwright's collection of cases under the B.N.A. Act give the leading decisions of the courts