



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Canadianization of Western Canada

Canadian national life may be said to have begun with the Confederation of 1867. Before that time our country, with its *disjuncta membra*, gave occasion, in its six divided provinces and vast unorganized territory, for a Brito-Canadian writer—who has never done us justice—to call it: “A mere fringe along the north of the American Republic.”

But the fiat went forth: Let the dry bones live; and bone was fitted to its bone; and muscle joined with muscle to make the union strong; and the winds of kindly Heaven blew upon it, and there stood on the first “Dominion Day” a great army of stalwart northern men, ready for exploits, waiting to subdue the wilderness and make the desert a beautiful garden.

Our poets are the singing birds of the Confederation Era of “Union and Progress,” and they sang of the rise of the new nation.

Because it was British born, one said:

“This Canada shall be
“The worthy heir of British power and British liberty.”
(*Machar*).

and again the sweet poetess sang:

“We are put for the right to keep
Unbroken still the cherished filial tie
That binds us to the distant sea-girt isle.”
(*Machar*).

and because we are free-born Britons came the boast of another:

“Come of right good stock to start with,
Best of the world’s blood in each vein;
Lords of ourselves and slave to no one,
For us or from us, you’ll find we’re MEN.”
(*Robert Reid*).

Moreover the bards did not forget that we are a vast Composite,
to be more firmly knit together: