

PUBLIC OPINION.

A FAMILY RESEMBLANCE —Mr. J. G. Bourinot, in a very able paper in the October number of the *Contemporary Review*, tells the world how very English Canadians are from a political point of view. He directs attention to the fact that there is a family resemblance of the strongest kind between the political institutions of Canada and those of Great Britain. Canadian institutions show their parentage in every feature. Canadian Parliaments, great and small, are like the British Parliament in their constitution, in their forms, and in their modes of procedure. The principle of responsibility to the representatives of the people is acknowledged and practised in all of them. No Government in the Dominion of Canada or in any of its provinces can live a day after it is known that it cannot command a majority in the popular branch of the Legislature. What is seen in the United States — an executive favouring one policy and a House of Representatives favouring another and a very different one—is as impossible in Canada as it is in the Mother Country. Mr. Bourinot shows that the French-Canadians take as kindly to and are as tenacious of responsible government as are English-Canadians. This is the more surprising as government of this kind is very different in principle from that to which the French in America were accustomed previous to the conquest. Mr. Bourinot says: "The history of Canada as a French colony which ended in 1759, was a record of autocratic government which gave no opportunity to the expansion of Canadian energy and intellect. The history of French Canada as an English dependency, like that of the other provinces of the Dominion, has been the record of a people working out their political destiny on the well understood principles

of that wonderful system of government which the experience of centuries teaches us is admirably calculated to develop individualism, and a spirit of self-assertion and self-reliance to enable a people to solve successfully those great political problems on which rests the happiness of mankind." Although the French inhabitants of Lower Canada were so determined to retain their language, their religion and their laws, they soon saw the merits of the English system of government, and became as eager to take advantage of the powers and privileges it gives the people as were the settlers of the Anglo-Saxon race. And now they are as great sticklers for parliamentary privileges and as resolute in asserting the principles of responsible government as are the inhabitants of any other part of the Dominion. Canada, like the Mother Country, enjoys the British blessing of an independent judiciary. The judges of the Canadian Bench are independent, not only of the caprices of the populace, but of the strife of parties. They exercise their high functions in an atmosphere untainted by the breath of political corruption and undisturbed by the storms of political contention. Canadians can only appreciate the value of an independent judiciary when they see the terrible abuses which its absence causes in the neighbouring republic. Mr. Bourinot traces the resemblance from point to point, and Englishmen, when they read his article, must be obliged to confess that Canadians, taking into consideration the differences between the circumstances of the new country and the old, have kept to the old ways and the old institutions with wonderful fidelity. And they have done this not on compulsion but of their own free will, because they had an intelligent love for