

THE WEEK.

Fourth Year.
Vol. IV., No 21.

Toronto, Thursday, April 21st, 1887.

\$3.00 per Annum.
Single Copies, 10 Cents.

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CANADIAN OPINION.

WHEN compared with Provincial opinion, the general opinion of the Dominion, the opinion which in independent States would be called national, is strikingly deficient in force and harmony. A Toronto paper lately cried out against the over-expression of Provincial views. "What we want is the national opinion," it declared, and in the hearts of all true Canadians the feeling would find a ready response. Provincialism is the bane of the Dominion—self-seeking, short-sighted Provincialism; and unhappily there is little to counteract it. Our protected and dependent political position ministers directly to it, as self-reliance and independence would militate directly against it. Colonial life is not national life; it will not give rise to national feeling; it is neither so stimulating nor so inspiring as national life; neither are its aspirations the same, nor will it move our hearts nor stir our minds in the mystic way that national life will; but it fosters aggressive Provincialism, encourages the formation of cliques, produces an unhealthy sentiment instead of a robust and hearty patriotism, and, as the writer has frequently claimed elsewhere, to this want of national life and feeling must in large part be attributed our literary feebleness and the paucity of ideas which Canadians have contributed to the thought of the world, to the higher life of mankind.

It is the aspirations of a land which draw the people together, making them to be of one heart and one mind, and what can the aspirations of a colony be other than those eminently and distinctly commercial and industrial? Such aspirations are all very well in their way, no doubt, but they alone will not make an united people. Where interests clash, and what seems desirable for one portion of the community is injurious to another, the result can be no other than ill-feeling and discord. When community of feeling is dependent upon trade it is preëminently necessary that the trade should be natural, and of sufficient extent and importance to arouse an interest that shall be mutual and lively, even though not especially disinterested. Such a condition of affairs is difficult to find, and it has not been found in Canada. Our inter-provincial trade is not great enough to serve as a bond of union, to arouse an active interest in the different divisions of the Dominion. We Canadians must look for something else, something higher and better to bring us together in spirit and in fact, if we as a people would work out our own salvation. The interest we display in our fellow-countrymen is a very lukewarm interest, altogether wanting in the highest essentials; the East, the Centre, the North-west, the West, even our two greatest cities, Montreal and Toronto, are strangely ignorant of all that peculiarly appertains to one another.

There is a Canadian sentiment undoubtedly, weak and halting though it be, but that it is of some force the Dominion itself bears living witness. There are many—and the writer counts himself among the number—who believe all that is needed to transform this weak sentiment into a strong and vivifying patriotism is that Canada should be endowed with the higher attributes and the more ennobling responsibilities of national independence

Our nationality is an unrecognised nationality; it will never be strong until it is recognised, and it will never be recognised until it is strong. We do not appreciate or study the literary productions of our fellows until they are recognised abroad, and we shall not appreciate or study ourselves until as a people we are recognised abroad. Here we have perhaps some explanation of our want of interest in the thoughts and opinions and doings of one another. The political and moral status of Canada is such that it does not inspire in our hearts the respect which must be the foundation of all true and lasting love. For the purposes of money-making it may be best that Canadians should not be responsible for their own protection, that they should be dependent upon another people: they can devote their minds and souls to the pursuit without any disturbing element. But those who ponder these things will know that the sense of being a protected people cannot but have a deep influence on us morally—an influence that makes for no good. Of course, if the great questions of peace and war are put beyond the control of Canada, Great Britain must in justice be responsible for Canada's protection. But whilst our protection is all that is just, is it all that is wise? Great Britain's protection might or might not be adequate—it would probably be very inadequate from the Canadian's point of view, as we all have rather exaggerated ideas concerning England's protection. But this is not the point to which special attention is directed. It is to the position we occupy. It ought not to be that a community of people numbering five millions should be in so humble a position that they must, whether they will or no, take part in a war, and be obliged to suffer from all its horrors and devastations at the pleasure of another and distant community. This aspect of the question has never been sufficiently realised owing to the comparative insignificance of the wars in which Great Britain, with one exception, has been engaged since the bloody days of Napoleon Bonaparte. As long as we are content to be dependent in any way on another people, we Canadians shall never accomplish anything really great in the realms of art and literature and politics. Of course there will be individual exceptions, as there have been in the past, but the spirit of a dependency is not the spirit which has made an England, a Germany, a France.

When we think of these things we shall see that a strong and healthy Canadian opinion cannot be expected under the present circumstances. Provincialism will rule until national responsibility comes in to struggle with and overcome it. Until then, all that we can do is to see to it that nothing is done to augment this bane of our life, this greedy Provincialism, and nothing left undone that may tend to the reduction of the evil. If it be true that our constitution is imperfect in its financial details, and that injustice is done to this or that Province by the arrangement which now obtains, it is a matter for the Federal Parliament to deal with; and any interference on the part of Provincial assemblies cannot but have unsatisfactory and even dangerous results. Nothing can be more unseemly and undignified, nothing can be more injurious and unpatriotic, than these incessant agitations, these demands for better terms, which are ever threatening the peace and even the life of the Dominion, and which are now about to burst forth anew with increased vehemence and bitterness. This state of things is greatly to be deplored and condemned. But it cannot be too strongly impressed upon our minds that condemnation, without an effort being made to remedy or improve that which is condemned, is almost worse than useless. Condemnation must be followed by action, and without action condemnation is a most unprofitable, not to say unmanly, way of showing our disapproval. There are few indeed in this country who have not political duties to perform, and the conscientious discharge of these duties is only less incumbent upon us than the discharge of our religious duties. As to the question how and in what definite practical way the work of exciting an interest in the affairs and well-being of our fellow-countrymen, even though they do dwell in another Province, of broadening the views of all engaged actively in dealing with the public concerns of the various divisions of the Dominion,—how this good work may best be approached, is a problem to which there can be no answer to suit all enquirers and all circumstances. If the Canadian press were more under the influence of patriotism, and less under the dominion of Party and Provincialism, the good it might accomplish in this direction would be inestimable; but the newspapers that would not sacrifice the interests of the country in order to gain a party advantage are lamentably few. Indeed