

ticipators in a work so noble—whose success would be fraught with consequences so important to ourselves and to the Empire; and I wish we might still hope that Canada would extend to the Anglo-American Society of England and the United States the cordial right hand of fellowship. She might thus become a powerful pacificator between her parent and her brethren—between two powerful and kindred countries, whose interests and whose duties to constitutional freedom, of which they are at the same time the exemplars and the champions, lie always in the cultivation of the closest and most friendly alliance. How far nobler would she appear in such a character—the apostle of peace and conciliation—than as a contriver of complications, and a promoter of ill-will. It may be fairly hoped that this Anglo-American Society will wield a wide and wholesome influence over the public opinion of the two countries. The chairman, Mr. Thomas Hughes, M.P., is a man of world-wide reputation, who, in addition to his high character and great influence in his own country, is second only, perhaps, to Mr. Bright, the English statesman best known and most popular with all classes in America. During his late visit to the United States, his fair and statesmanlike views upon the Alabama claims, pronounced in Boston, and published throughout America, produced a favourable and tranquillizing effect upon the popular mind of that country. They would not have listened to Mr. Roebuck, who was unfriendly to them during the war, as was his undoubted right, but who had denounced them as the "scum of the earth" during the debate on his motion for recognition of the South. There is, no doubt, the friends of Mr. Hughes, in England, who advised his visit to this Continent on a mission of peace, understood the advantage of approaching the American heart through a friend who had stood by them in their trials. Mr. Hughes, who is a leading supporter of the administration in the House of Commons, paid also a brief visit to Canada, and he is becoming a close student of the Canadian questions. He belongs to a party in England, whose views, sooner or later, prevail, and I am sure you will forgive the digression, if I read an extract from a letter written by him to a valued friend of my own in Montreal, under date of 27th December last:—

"I do not mean," he says, "for a moment to deny that it is a considerable wrench for an Englishman to accept the position (of Canadian Independence), but have no doubt

at all that what we have to do in our own interest, as well as in yours, is to face the music, and make whatever sacrifices and arrangements are necessary to help the Dominion in setting up for herself as an independent nation at the earliest possible time. We can and ought to do it, and the sooner your statesmen and newspapers make up their minds to it the better. I am only anxious to further the interests of both countries, and not the least to do anything by way of making political capital for any party here or on your side. The ordinary party distinctions are perfectly insignificant when these issues are to be tried. There is no time for delay, and if we allow the present crisis to drift on without action, the result will be disastrous to all three countries." These are words of an Imperial statesman of great repute and ability, whose honesty and loyalty no slanderer dare impeach. This man comprehends that the great duty of the hour is to soften the asperities and unravel the complications between England and America, and he believes a necessary incident of the great work is to establish an independent nationality here.

But let that pass. Whether he is right or wrong we have grave complications before us. They have to be dealt with by the British or Canadian authorities or both, and they involve interest, of such magnitude and are pressed upon us by such agencies, that the speediest relief is the best. We have no responsibility for Imperial action, except as we inspire it, but let us see with what tools of our own we are undertaking the work. The Government of Canada at this moment is controlled by Sir John A. MacDonald, Sir George E. Cartier and Sir Francis Hincks. Not to speak as a partizan, I have always admired Sir John, though I never supported him. His long political career has been distinguished by remarkable ability. I could point out defects in his character and his policy which to my mind have justified me in opposing him. I believe he has reigned in virtue of the corruption which Sir Francis Hincks inaugurated and that he has done much to poison public opinion and political morality of the country. But I have always admired his tact, his industry and his great ability, and I have not been altogether proof against that mysterious personal charm which has so long linked his faithful followers to his fortunes. His recent prostration excited all our sympathies and mellowed them into something like affection for the man, against whom some of us have struggled for years;