

It is a growing opinion of British statesmen that we have passed "the youth of nations," and reached maturity; it is not for us to deny it, consistently with our self respect. I know what grave questions and weighty duties the assumption of national responsibilities involves. But is there not manhood enough in our population of two millions and a half to meet them? Does it become us to insist on perpetuating a connexion in which we are publicly told the advantage is all on our side. Does it become us as true friends of the mother country to insist on a connexion which can only be a weakness to her if an obvious contingency should arise, and which is so liable to complicate her foreign policy with respect to this continent? Is it wise to maintain a relation which exposes us to such criticism as we have lately heard from the British Parliament and Press, and which if reiterated can only stir up ill feeling on all sides? Would it not be more wise, more self-respecting on our part, more satisfactory to all parties concerned, to prepare for the event indicated by Lord Brougham, when he said that "without any quarrel, without any coldness or alienation of any sort, but with perfect amity and good will, and on purely voluntary grounds, there should succeed to the Colonial connexion, a connexion between two free and independent states."

Our present position favors a preparation for this event, and recent circumstances remind us how needful it is to bear it in mind. Our mother country is not going to cast us off before we are properly able to take care of ourselves; but we should be unworthy of our parentage if we were to hang back after that time had come. The foundation of our political institutions is laid. We have transplanted as much from England as can be transplanted. We could have not better model than we have taken. We must use what we have, and work out our own course. The popular element must predominate in our affairs. [A voice, — Democracy is a failure] If democracy is a failure, so much the worse for Canada, for Canada is inevitably committed to democracy. Nor is this our doing. Whether for good or ill, it has come to us in the natural and