

multiplicity of interests involved ; and that, if, by any means, some of these interests were withdrawn and this machinery simplified, so as to make a Federal Government at all practicable in British America, the peculiar advantages derivable from a Government of that form, would be more than counterbalanced by the disadvantages.

None of these objections are applicable to the plan of a *Legislative Union* of the Provinces ; if, indeed, any valid objection to it can be found. Such a union could take place immediately, and without any change whatever in the Constitution which each now possesses, or in their relation to the Mother Country. No political movement, pregnant with such important results, could be more simple ; nor, if a union is so much desired as a very general expression of opinion renders evident, more easy. The formation of the union would, in fact, necessitate no greater change, in any Province, than a mere change in the seat of Government. It would not necessarily follow that, from this centralization of Provincial Legislative and Executive authorities, the local interests of remote portions of the Union would suffer, as is generally found to be the case under such circumstances. Reforms in internal policy have already been adopted, in a part of British America, which, if made general, would effectually prevent any such injurious result. The principle of Municipal Corporations, which has been acted upon with such complete success in Canada, and which is now so extensively advocated in the Lower Provinces, furnishes ample security against any abuses of the centralization system. The plan of having the whole country divided into counties ; and then again into townships, towns, and cities, each forming a Municipal Corporation and having the entire management of its exclusively local affairs ; would provide, under the proposed Union, a more immediate and effective protection to local interests than could be afforded by that of allowing each Province to retain, for that purpose, its present cumbrous and expensive government machinery. At the same time, no one of those Municipalities, however perfectly organised, could ever become dangerous, or even very troublesome, as a rebel

against the authority of the General Government, a statement which certainly could not be predicated of any Province, under a continuance of its present, political organization. An arrangement of this kind would indeed be, in one sense, a Federal Union ; but it would form a Confederation, not of five Provinces, but of some 140 counties and cities ; and one differing essentially, both in its nature and operation, from any which has preceded it.

It is more than probable that public undertakings would be found necessary requiring the co-operation of several of these Municipalities ; and that questions of a purely local nature would arise, requiring the joint consideration of several of them. To provide for such cases, the principle of county corporations could be carried a step further and applied to certain larger sections of country, each comprising several counties : so that all legislation of that tedious, burdensome, and frequently injudicious character which is employed about "private bills"—all, in short, which is purely local in its character, *but no more than this*, would be thrown off the central Parliament and entrusted to those who are best qualified to deal with it. An arrangement of precisely this nature, for the United Kingdom, has been, in a late number of the Westminster Review, ably advocated by a writer who, as a liberal and philosophical expounder of political science, is probably unequalled by any of the present century. It is spoken of as a scheme the realization of which, in that country, can be hoped for only in the remote future. Here the case is different. Political changes can be easily and immediately effected, in a new country such as this, which it would require many years of difficulty to impose upon the prejudices which exist in the British Isles.

As already observed, the formation of a Legislative Union necessitates no material change in the present Constitutions of the Provinces. The incorporation of counties is not an essential, *preparatory* measure. Without any extension of that system beyond the limits within which it now exists in British America, local affairs would be nearly, if not quite, as well managed, and